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CIS to boost joint security

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, under fresh pressure following the Chechen hostage crisis, won backing from the CIS Friday to crack down on terrorism and separatism at a summit dominated by security issues. "We decided to unite against the bandits and terrorists and act together," Mr. Yeltsin told reporters after the 17th summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which embraces 12 of the 15 former Soviet republics. Speaking a day after Russian troops ended a withering four-day assault on Chechen rebels holding scores of hostages in the Dagestani village of Pervomaiskaya, Mr. Yeltsin said the CIS leaders "understood the tragedy of terrorism and separatism in Russia and the CIS." "If this spreads everywhere it will be bad for everyone," Mr. Yeltsin said. Members of the CIS "acting individually cannot ensure their national security," Mr. Yeltsin said, but "we can do this through a system of collective security." Mr. Yeltsin, who was unanimously reelected chairman of the CIS leadership council, said NATO members, and above all the United States, were "constantly strengthening their military capability," and he urged the CIS to learn from other regional associations.

3 killed in Addis Ababa blast

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) — Three people were killed and a score of people wounded, 10 of them seriously, in a bomb attack on a luxury hotel in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, police and hospital staff said Friday. Police chief Eranshi Gebre Tekle said the blast, at 20:10 p.m. (1710 GMT) Thursday, devastated the hallway of the Ghion hotel, where several diplomats from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) were dining. Hotel manager Haile Asfan said the bar, the dining room and a shop were seriously damaged. A diplomatic source reached by telephone from Nairobi, who asked not to be named, said the two women and one man who died were Ethiopian employees at the hotel, which is located next to the presidential palace. Medical sources said that the lives of three of the wounded were in danger, while 10 other injured people had been able to leave hospital after treatment. Several sources said the seriously injured include a Malian, an Indian and an Arab whose precise nationality was not known. The French embassy stated that two French tourists were slightly injured in the blast but decided to continue their holiday in Ethiopia.

Palestinians vote today in historic self-rule elections

3 Hamas members shot dead near Jenin, but polls to go ahead; Jerusalem, Hebron are braced for trouble

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIANS WERE urged on Friday to vote, especially in East Jerusalem, in elections expected to return Yasser Arafat as their first democratically-elected leader.

On the eve of the elections, Israeli troops shot dead three Hamas activists near the West Bank town of Jenin, triggering an angry demonstration.

The three in a speeding car tried to force their way through an army checkpoint into Israeli territory and opened fire, wounding a soldier in the leg, the army said. The troops returned fire, killing all three, it added.

Hundreds of people took to Jenin's streets calling "revenge, revenge," as some of them tore down election posters. The crowd chanted support for the armed struggle against Israel and scorn for the peace process.

Palestinian officials, however, said the incident should not be allowed to affect their historic polls.

Mr. Arafat in his first reaction, avoided attacking Israel for the killings.

"We are trying to understand the situation and the whole story, and then we will later give our reactioo," he told journalists in Gaza City. "It is under investigation now."

Colonel Rubhi Arafat, a Palestinian official on a military liaison committee with Israel, said over Israeli television: "This is not going to affect the elections.

"Three days ago, two Israelis were killed (by Palestinians on the West Bank) and that didn't affect the election process. I think it will be the same this time."

The bodies of the Hamas militants were handed over to Palestinian police in Jenin. The families turned down a police request that they be buried the same night.

The funerals were to be held after mid-day prayers in mosques, raising the prospect of a Hamas demonstration on election day.

Salam Jaradat, 21, Tareq Mansour, 23, and Alam Abu Ara, whose age was not given, were known in the Jenin region as militants of Hamas, which rejects the peace process with Israel.

A Palestinian official, asking not to be named, backed the army's account that the militants fired first. Earlier reports from Palestinian sources said they had

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Majali: Presence of Jordanian team reflects support

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Senator Abdul Salam Al Majali, who heads a Jordanian observer team to oversee Saturday's Palestinian elections, said on Friday the participation of a Jordanian delegation reflects Jordan's genuine desire and keen interest in ensuring the Palestinian right to self-determination.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Majali, a former prime minister, said he believes the "creation of an independent Palestinian entity would enhance the unique Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, and help the Jordanian and Palestinian people to choose the type of the relationship."

Dr. Majali described the Palestinian elections as a unique phenomenon in the world, saying that the Palestinians, despite their limited resources, lack of time and the limited experience, had been able to achieve a lot, including the finalisation of the election law and the preparations for the elections, which won the admiration of the European Union observers.

"Undonhtedly, such a nation which is still under occupation and does not enjoy its full freedom and is facing difficult circumstances, really deserves an international testimony that it is a democratic nation and can do a lot," Dr. Majali said. He added that the elections provide a similar opportunity for Israel to give this testimony provided that it ensures a healthy atmosphere for elections in the various areas, particularly in Jerusalem and Hebron.

He referred to some election difficulties in these two cities were beyond the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) capability to handle.

Israel has allowed only five polling centres in Jerusalem, forcing large number of vo-

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His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in Eilat on Thursday night after the signing earlier in the day in Aqaba of the last four agreements stipulated in the Oct.. 26 , 1994 peace treaty between Jordan and Israel (AFP photo)

Jordan, Israel sign last 4 accords, expect fruitful results in all areas

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AQABA — Fifteen months after the signing of their peace treaty, Jordan and Israel have finalised all the agreements the two countries had pledged to conclude as a prelude for full normalisation of ties between them.

"Today, normal life between Jordan and Israel can begin at last," His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said in Eilat after the signing in Aqaba Thursday of the last four of the 13 agreements stipulated in the peace treaty, which was reached in October 1994.

The agreements were signed at a ceremony in Aqaba attended by Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

The four accords initialled were on scientific and cultural exchange, signed by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and his Israeli counterpart Ehud Barak, a memorandum of understanding on post and telecommunications, signed by Minister of Post and Telecommunications in Jordan and Israel Jamal Sarairch and Shulamit Aloni; special procedures for Aqaba/Eilat, signed by Aqaba Governor Fayez Khasawneh and Israeli Ambassador to Jordan Shimon Shamir, and a maritime boundaries agreement signed by General Tahsin Sburdom, deputy chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, and Moshe Kochanowski, deputy director general of the Israeli ministry of defence.

In remarks made after signing the accords, Jordanian and Israeli officials also exchanged gifts and stressed that the accords were diligently worked out to guarantee the interests of the two countries and will set the foundation for mutual future cooperation.

Mr. Sarairch said the agreement on post and telecommunication will allow for cooperation in this field and relations in it will be governed by international treaties.

"We can with ability and goodwill step into the 21st century," said Ms. Aloni.

"Today's signing not only represents the culmination of all our work but the effective dawning of a new era of peace," said Mr. Kabariti.

Geo. Shurdom said the Jordanian Armed Forces will defend the peace the same way "we defended our country."

"It is an extraordinary accomplishment and must serve as a monument for all to see and follow," said Mr. Kabariti, adding that Jordan wants peace to be sustainable, comprehensive and irreversible.

"When there was a way, we found the will," Mr. Kabariti said in reference to the peace treaty. But in order for peace to be lasting, he said, it must be comprehensive.

Mr. Barak described the

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Bosnia deadline 'mostly' fulfilled

Combined agency dispatches

THIRTY DAYS after the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)-led Implementation Force (IFOR) took over from the United Nations in Bosnia, most of the initial deadlines for peace have been met, the alliance's civilian and military chiefs said on Friday.

"The parties have demonstrated compliance with the cessation of hostilities agreement and they have refrained from offensive actions," NATO Secretary General Javier Solana told a news conference in Brussels.

"The parties have completed the withdrawal of their forces from the agreed cease-fire zones of separation.

"However, the requirement for the parties to cooperate fully with the International Red Cross by releasing prisoners of war (PoWs) by today may not be fulfilled. The PoWs must be released," he added.

The final judgement on whether all the former combatants in Bosnia have complied with the Dayton 30-day deadline will be taken at a meeting of IFOR commanders in Sarajevo on Saturday, but Mr. Solana expressed satisfaction at the progress to date.

Supreme Allied Commander in Europe General George Joulwan agreed.

"We are on track. We have met the D+30 requirements," he said, adding that some 35,000 troops were already in place with the remaining 25,000 due within the next 30 days.

In Povrsnica, Bosnia, under the watchful eye of 40 U.S. troops, a group of nine Bosnian Serb soldiers loaded their remaining belongings onto a truck Friday, pulling out of one of their last front-line positions in northeast Bosnia ahead of a midnight deadline.

The soldiers, joking for the cameras as they hauled boxes of ammunition, guns, blocks

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Christopher: Real hope for Syria-Israel peace this year

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in an interview published on Friday there was "real hope" Israel and Syria would achieve peace this year.

The Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth quoted Mr. Christopher as saying negotiations in the United States between the two countries, as well as his own Middle East visits, were promising.

"We now have a process leading to the conclusion of the negotiations in 1996," he said. "There is real hope for that."

Mr. Christopher said he stressed to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad the importance of a face-to-face meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

The secretary of state said he found at his meeting with Mr. Assad earlier this month that the Syrian leader had a clearer vision of peace with Israel than ever before which included peaceful coexistence as well as economic relations.

For more than four years negotiators made little progress in on-again-off-again talks. Syria demands Israel withdraw from the Golan Heights it seized in the 1967 war.

Israel says it will consider a withdrawal if Syria meets its requirements for security and peaceful relations.

A Dahaf poll of 500 Jewish settlers on the Golan for Yedioth found if there were a national referendum on a peace treaty with Syria that included withdrawal from the plateau, 45 per cent would support the treaty 53 per cent would oppose it.

Asked how they would act if they were told to leave their homes in a peace deal, 66 per cent said they would accept compensation and leave eight per cent said they would resist.

There are 15,000 Israelis living amidst 18,000 Druze on the Golan.

Israel's ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, said Friday that the country would have to take "crucial decisions on the future of the Golan" in coming months "regardless of the Israeli elections."

The polls are due on Oct. 29 but could be brought forward to June.

"In exchange for an accord with Syria, Israel will demand a halt to Hizbollah (guerrilla) operations against Israel" from South Lebanon, said Mr. Rabinovich, a member of Israel's peace negotiating team (see page 2)

The talks are to resume on Jan. 24 near Washington in the presence of military experts.

Syria said on Thursday a peace deal with Israel could be reached in the coming months if the Jewish state committed itself to peace.

Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa also told a joint news conference with his French counterpart Herve de Charette that Syria's future ties with Israel should take into account the prolonged conflict in the Middle East.

A peace agreement with Israel "could be made in the coming months if Israel seriously commits itself to peace," Mr. Sharaa said.

"Withdrawal (from the Golan) requires normal peace ties that are based on objective requirements which, from our view point, should not be exaggerated.

"These ties should take into consideration the nature of this long conflict in the region," he added.

The minister did not elaborate.

Ghali awaits Iraqi response over 986

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali hopes Iraq will respond promptly to his proposal for talks on implementing an oil-for-food deal, his spokeswoman said.

The deal, contained in Resolution 986, aims at alleviating the effects on the Iraqi people of sanctions adopted after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The resolution adopted in April 1995 by the 15 members of the Security Council would allow Iraq to $1 billion worth of oil every quarter. Proceeds from the internationally monitored exports would be used to buy humanitarian supplies.

Dr. Ghali on Thursday sent a letter to Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz inviting Baghdad to start discussions on the implementation of Resolution 986, U.N. spokeswoman Sylvana Foa confirmed Friday.

Mr. Aziz had earlier proposed a dialogue "provided no conditions are posed" on Iraq.

Ms. Foa said Dr. Ghali expected a positive response from the Iraqi government as soon as possible.

"If the name of the game is talking about the implementation of Resolution 986, there very well will be discussions and nobody's going to object to that, providing the context of those discussions is clearly understood by all concerned," Ambassador Sir John Weston of Britain, the Security Council President, said Thursday.

He added: "I think the secretary-general is quite clear after talking to several of us that he has the mandate set out in paragraph 13 of the Resolution 986. And that is the mandate that he needs."

It was not immediately known when or where the talks might take place.

Ferry boat hijackers surrender in Turkey

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Chechen sympathisers who seized a Black Sea ferry surrendered Friday, Istanbul city authorities said, ending a four-day nightmare for more than 200 passengers and crew held hostage.

The surrender and the hostages' release was announced by the interim city governor, Ridvan Yenisen.

"They gave themselves up to the Turkish authorities and left their weapons on board," one of the vessel's owners, Atilla Nergis, earlier told the domestic Anatolia news agency.

In a radio-telephone call, overhead earlier by an AFP reporter, one of the hijackers on the ferry Avrasya told Turkish authorities: "We will release all the hostages."

"I cannot give details because they are still under discussion. We have attained our objective," the hijacker said.

The hijackers released 12 from the ship in the hours prior to their surrender, according to Anatolia and Turkish state television.

The ship spent the day loitering at the entrance of the Bosphorus Strait, which leads in Istanbul, surrounded by Turkish security forces and buzzed by aircraft chartered by the world's media.

The ferry — seized on Tuesday — rode at anchor close by the small island of Sogan, near the Anadolufeneri lighthouse on the eastern shore of the Bosphorus Strait, though it was seen manoeuvring later.

In Ankara, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller called on the hijackers earlier Friday to surrender. "Give yourselves up as soon as possible," she said on television. "There is no other way out."

But the hijackers struck a defiant pose.

One of them, speaking to Turkish television, deman-

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Likud will not 'undo' Palestinian self-rule – Netanyahu

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

LIKUD, THE main rightist challenger to the ruling Labour Party in Israel, is fully confident that it would win next elections because it believes that Israelis know that it is in a better position to reach security-based agreements with the Palestinians as well as Syria, according to Likud leader Benyamin Netanyahu.

Mr. Netanyahu, who is expected to run for premiership in the October elections, also believes that Palestinian-Israeli coexistence is possible if the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) dropped its "rhetoric" and induced a "psychological" change among the Palestinians.

The Likud leader ruled out any peace accord with Syria based on an Israeli military withdrawal from the Golan Heights, arguing that leaving the strategic plateau would deprive the Jewish state of security guarantees it upholds most while making peace with the Arabs.

In a wide-ranging interview with the Jordan Times at his office in West Jerusalem last week, Mr. Netanyahu emphatically voiced his party's newfound "enthusiastic" support for the Israel-PLO autonomy agreements and pledged he would not "undo" what has already been implemented under the accords.

"I would not reconquer" the areas now under Palestinian autonomy, but would seek to ensure that the Palestinian entity does not expand and would limit the Palestinians to simple autonomy rather than growing into an independent armed entity, he said.

Mr. Netanyahu, 47, called on Yasser Arafat to "take an example.... from King Hussein, who forthrightly stands before those who oppose peace" if the PLO chairman was to gain Israeli public confidence.

The Likud leader, one of the most articulate among Israeli politicians and known for his "buzz words" in encounters with the media, said Mr. Arafat, as a sign of his good faith for peace, should renounce the PLO charter that calls for the destruction of Israel.

Israeli-Palestinian coexistence is possible "if the Palestinian leadership begins to talk about coexistence rather than speaking directly and openly, as it does, about peace as merely an interlude between wars," Mr. Netanyahu said.

He accused the PLO leadership of "speaking about the present arrangement as merely a stepping stone towards the liberation of all of Palestine, by which they mean all of Israel."

According to Mr. Netanyahu, the Palestinians need "greater freedom" but that has to be combined with Israel's "security needs" if any peace agreement were to hold.

The former diplomat, who inherited the Likud mantle in 1993 after it lost elections to Labour, said his party's political fortunes had not been damaged by the Nov. 4 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin since "the basic elements and questions" in Israeli politics had not changed.

Asked whether he was confident of a Likud victory in elections, officially set for October, he said: "It is possible. It might happen."

According to Mr. Netanyahu, the Labour Party tried to make use of the "tragic" murder of Mr. Rabin to gain political capital.

The Likud leader implied that the drop in his popularity rating in opinion polls was only temporary and was being reversed as time passes after the Rabin assassination.

His political platform in the context of the peace process, he said, was based on seeking to expand "our relations with all Arab neighbours, including the Palestinians, pretty much on the model of the successful peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan."

"These are the treaties that received very wide public support. One initiated by the Likud, with Egypt, and the other supported enthusiastically by the Likud under my leadership, peace with Jordan," he said.

"Both peace agreements are characterised by very strong public confidence in Israel in the sincere intentions for peace on the part of our Arab partners," he said. "Both King Hussein and the late (Egyptian President) Anwar Sadat stood very firmly before their people and the opponents of peace... saying very clearly that they are committed to peace, to the end of holy war, jihad, to the end of the anti-Jew laws, the boycott laws, and so on.

"Unfortunately that is not forthcoming from Arafat, who gives a 21-gun salute to a mass killer like Yahya Ayyash. Imagine what would happen if the Israeli government would give a 21-gun salute to a mass killer like Baruch Goldstein, from the Hebron massacre."

Benyamin Netanyahu

Mr. Netanyahu said the King's move to honour Jordanian actors Nabil Sawalha, Hisham Yanis and Amal Dabbas — who had come under fire from the Jordanian Artists Union for performing in Israel ("by the

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Carter expects fair Palestinian election

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, leading an international team of observers to the first Palestinian elections, said be expects Saturday's balloting to be fair, despite some hitches.

"I believe it will be an honest election — one more step in the process toward ultimate peace," Mr. Carter said at a news conference Thursday night in Jerusalem.

Mr. Carter heads a 40-member observer delegation that includes his wife Rosalynn, daughter Amy and grandson Jason.

Thursday was the last full day of campaigning, and candidates were hampered by snowstorms in Jerusalem and the hilly areas of the West Bank.

Thousands of Palestinian police deployed at rural polling stations Thursday to protect ballot boxes. In an effort to avert violence by either Palestinian or Israeli extremists, Israel sealed its borders with the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israeli police chief Assaf Hafetz said police had received warnings that the militant group Hamas planned to sabotage the elections. Extra police will be deployed Saturday in Jerusalem and in the West Bank, he said.

A group of Arab-American lawmakers, however, were given assurances by Hamas representatives Thursday that the group would not disrupt the balloting, said U.S. Representative Nick Rahall.

An Israeli monitoring group, Peace Watch, accused Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat Thursday of replacing candidates chosen by his Fateh faction in primaries with his loyalists, and threatening or bribing candidates who ran as independents. Peace Watch also said the borders and allotment of seats in electoral districts were altered at a very late date, apparently to help Arafat-backed candidates.

Mr. Carter also listed a number of issues of concern related to the election, including unequal access for independent and opposition candidates to television and radio, confusion over the location of polling stations in East Jerusalem, and intimidation of voters by both Israelis and Palestinians.

He said he was to raise his concerns in meetings Friday with Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

But, he added, "I don't think any of these issues are serious enough to cause doubts. ...I fully expect a successful election."

Mr. Carter recalled the historic peace agreement he brokered between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat at Camp David in 1978. That agreement called for Palestinian elections and limited self-rule, but negotiations on implementation foundered until the breakthrough Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreement in 1993 that led to Israel's withdrawal from Palestinian towns in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

"The words that we carved out in Camp David in 1978 were that Palestinians would be granted full autonomy," Mr. Carter said, stressing the word "full."

"That has not yet been realised, and I hope that this election will be a major step toward that goal."

Asked if the elections were a step towards an independent Palestinian state, Mr. Carter said "that's a judgement for the Palestinians to make.

"I would say a state is the ultimate goal of the Palestinians," he said. "I have no quarrel with that."

In the West Bank town of Hebron, Israeli troops blocked 200 Palestinian demonstrators from marching outside a Jewish enclave on Thursday. Witnesses said a Palestinian television cameraman was detained and beaten.

Hebron is the only Palestinian city where Israeli troops will be present during Saturday's elections.

Hebron settlers said they would be in the streets in large numbers Saturday, but would not seek confrontations. "We are going to come and show that we are going to live in this city forever," said settler spokesman Noam Arnon.

Mr. Carter said he was concerned about whether voters would be able to move freely in Hebron.

Rabbani ready for transfer of power

KABUL (R) — The Afghan government has said it was ready to transfer power if a United Nations special envoy could convince all sides to accept a peace deal.

A spokesman for embattled President Burhanuddin Rabbani said the government supported the current peace efforts by the envoy, Mahmoud Mestiri, who arrived in the capital Kabul earlier in the day for talks.

Mr. Mestiri, who met Mr. Rabbani during his one-day visit, said he would be talking to all sides in the conflict and would seek a ceasefire and a transfer of power.

The presidential spokesman, Aziz Morad, said the government accepted the terms and would accept additional names on a proposed list for an interim government. However, he said alleged interference by foreign powers was still the biggest obstacle to peace in Afghanistan.

Mr. Mestiri said on arrival in Kabul that the rebel Taliban militia should negotiate with the government since it lacked the military means to achieve its goals.

"The Taliban are learning they cannot have a solution through military means," he told reporters. "If you don't have military means, what else is there but negotiation?"

Mr. Mestiri said he would seek Mr. Rabbani's views on opposition suggestions for names to be added to a U.N.-proposed interim council to assume power.

Mr. Rabbani has said he was willing to bow to long-standing opposition demands for his resignation if an agreed mechanism for a peaceful transfer of power could be put in place.

Mr. Mestiri said northern opposition leader General Abdul Rashid Dostum had proposed 10 names and Mohammad Asif Mohsini of the Shi'ite Muslim Harkati-e-Islami faction had proposed two.

Palestinians await first government

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The self-rule legislature to be elected Saturday in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, will be the first democratic body ever designed to permit Palestinians to govern themselves.

According to the terms laid down in the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords of 1993, the 88-member council will hold executive and legislative powers until the end of the current phase of autonomy due to expire on May 4, 1999.

It will have authority over civilian and police affairs covering such areas as the economy, banking and taxation, education, health care, local and regional government and public works.

Israel will retain broad security powers, including control of borders and authority over roads and settlements used by some 140,000 Jews living on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The powers of the self-rule government were laid out in detail in the Israeli-Palestinian interim agreement on autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip signed in Washington on September 28.

The Palestinian president will be elected by universal suffrage in a parallel vote on Saturday, becoming the 89th member of the council.

The president will head the executive branch of government, the Palestinian National Authority, which will be appointed by the council and be answerable to the legislature.

The authority will replace the provisional body run by Mr. Arafat from his Gaza City headquarters since the start of self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho in May 1994.

Four-fifths of the ministers in the authority must be elected members of the council, with the president retaining the right to appoint the rest from outside.

The council is designed to serve as a counterweight to the executive branch, with the right to challenge and reject draft legislation proposed by the president.

The legislature can also vote censure motions against authority ministers, although not against the elected president.

Conversely, the president has no power to dissolve the council.

One of the primary tasks of the government to be elected Saturday will be to lead negotiations with Israel on the final status of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem.

These talks are due to open in May and are in theory to be concluded by the end of the autonomy period three years later.

NEWS IN BRIEF

More Jews in Israel than abroad in decade

TEL AVIV (AP) — Within the next decade, most of the world's Jews will be living in Israel, a newspaper reported Friday. The Haaretz daily newspaper published partial results Friday of a World Jewish Congress population study. The study is to officially released at a conference next week. According to the report, Israel will surpass the United States as the country with the world's largest Jewish population. There are currently 13 million Jews in the world, with close to five million living in Israel, the report said. The United States is home to 5.8 million Jews, but the number of American Jews is shrinking because of assimilation and low birth rates. The report noted that there is no country besides Israel where the Jewish population is experiencing natural growth — through births — although orthodox Jewish communities in many countries are growing. The increase in the number of Jews in Germany and Canada is due to immigration, the report said. The number of Jews in Israel is growing both through immigration and births.

Court sentences settler for stoning Arab cars

TEL AVIV (AP) — A Tel Aviv court sentenced a Jewish settler to six months community service Friday for throwing stones at a Palestinian car, Israel Radio reported. The settler, Hillel Lieberman, was convicted of endangering lives by throwing stones at a Palestinian car near a West Bank Jewish settlement two years ago. The driver of the car slammed into another vehicle as he tried to escape the stones. Mr. Lieberman, from the Jewish settlement of Immanuel in the West Bank, denied the charges. He faced up to a 20 year sentence.

Lebanese army can enter refugee camps — Arafat

BEIRUT (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said the Lebanese army had the right to enter Palestinian refugee camps in the country in remarks published Friday. "The Lebanese army has the right to exercise its prerogatives across the whole of the national territory, including inside the camps," he told the weekly Revue du Liban. Under accords signed in 1969 between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Lebanon, Lebanese forces do not go into the 12 refugee camps, where Palestinians maintain security. Beirut unilaterally tore up the accords in 1987 but still does not send troops into the camps.

Yemen farmers protest fuel price rises

ADEN (R) — Yemen farmers blocked a major Sanaa-Aden highway to protest against a sharp rise in fuel prices, witnesses said on Friday. They said road transport came to a halt on Thursday at Mabar, 80 kilometres south of the capital Sanaa, where protesting farmers and some students blocked the road with tractors and bulldozers. "Buses were turned back to Sanaa... taxi drivers charged three times the normal prices," said one traveller who arrived in Aden late on Thursday by taxi from Sanaa. The farmers were protesting against a 200 per cent increase in diesel price, the main fuel used to operate their machinery.

FERRY HIJACK: Two armed members of a commando team which hijacked a Turkish ferry boat look up to a helicopter flying over the boat near Istanbul on Friday, shortly before the hijack ended and the commandos surrendered to the Turkish authorities (see page one) (AFP photo)

Rabinovich outlines new phase in talks with Syria

WASHINGTON (USIA) — "We are now in the midst of an entirely new phase" in the negotiations between Israel and Syria, the Israeli ambassador to the United States said in a briefing at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy on Thursday.

A number of events have helped pump new life into the talks, Itamar Rabinovich said. Among these are the new government Prime Minister Shimon Peres formed following the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the continued progress in implementing the Oslo II accords, Saturday's Palestinian elections, the success of October's Amman economic summit and the fact that Israeli elections will be held this year.

Together these factors have "created a better atmosphere" between the two countries and permitted the Israelis to focus attention more closely on the Syrian negotiations," he said.

Mr. Rabinovich, a key member of the Israeli delegation which has been negotiating with the Syrians at the Wye Plantation in eastern Maryland, described the Israeli position in terms of a house. The first story is built on four principles — peace, withdrawal of military forces, security and timing. The second, he said, consists of "new accents" the Peres administration has added — comprehensiveness, the quality of peace, economic development and "an appeal to the United States to become even more active" in the negotiating process.

The Syrians have responded positively to these new accents, Mr. Rabinovich said, citing Syrian statements and articles which have appeared in the media there since November.

For the first time, the Syrians have agreed to consider Israeli concerns about what a full peace might entail. This attitude "has made a big difference" in the negotiations, he stated.

The one issue on which the two sides have found the most agreement is comprehensiveness, the Israeli ambassador said. An agreement with Syria would mean peace with all of Israel's immediate neighbours and spell the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This in turn would enable the parties to focus on other pressing regional issues: water, overpopulation, and economic development.

Mr. Rabinovich said that he believes the Syrian side will be given an expanded mandate to discuss "quality of peace issues" when the Wye Plantation talks resume on January 24. At that time senior military officers are also expected to join the U.S., Israeli and Syrian delegation.

Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak is also slated to be in Washington Jan. 22 and 23 to discuss the negotiations with the Israeli team, he added.

Syria's new attitude towards the negotiations has apparently not been to everyone's liking. Mr. Rabinovich pointed to "some manifestations of Syrian-Iranian tensions" over the seriousness of the talks, as well as Damascus' support for the Arab side in the dispute over the Tunb islands and its desire for better relations with the United States.

Reuter adds: Mr. Rabinovich shrugged off the impact of possible early elections in Israel on the talks, and said they could continue "full steam ahead" at least for the next few weeks.

Mr. Rabinovich spoke after Israeli newspapers speculated that Mr. Peres could cash in on his soaring popularity by advancing national elections from October to May.

U.S. mediators have sought to use the elections to pressure Syria into a peace deal. The defeat of Mr. Peres's Labour Party by the right-wing opposition could make an accord less likely a victory could remove all urgency from the issue.

Mr. Rabinovich did not rule out that the elections would be brought forward. "I will not tell you that there will not be a decision in Israel on an early election," he said.

"But for at least the next few weeks we can negotiate on the assumption that this is not there. I think everybody wants to negotiate on that assumption for the time being."

"For the time being we can negotiate full steam ahead without talking or thinking about elections."

Mr. Rabinovich is part of the Israeli team that will resume talks with Syrian officials Jan. 24 at Wye Plantation.

"I will not tell you that it makes no difference, but for a negotiation that has lasted now for over four years... you don't measure everything by the question of whether the elections take place in October or a couple of months earlier," Mr. Rabinovich said.

"As a negotiator I can tell you that I don't feel any constraint at this point."

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz said the United States, which is hoping to wrap up an Israeli-Syrian deal this year, was pressing Mr. Peres to stick with October elections to avoid harming the peace talks.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said in Damascus on Thursday a peace deal with Israel could be reached in coming months "if Israel seriously commits itself to peace."

Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited Israel and Syria last week and persuaded them to expand the negotiations by adding military experts to their diplomatic teams.

The talks centre on the scope and timing of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, security arrangements to guarantee the new frontier, and the nature of future Israeli-Syrian ties.

Although there have been no major breakthroughs in four years, Mr. Rabinovich told the Washington Institute for Near East Policy that he had seen a gradual "attenuation" of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad's stance on normal ties with Israel.

"The Assad regime is now willing to sign a full-fledged peace treaty with Israel that would include an element of normalisation — what element we don't know yet," he said.

Mr. Rabinovich also indicated that before any accord he expected Syria to halt the activities of pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrillas in South Lebanon, whose operations Damascus, as the main power broker in the country, currently tolerates.

"When we are on the eve of coming to an agreement, this question will have to be fully sorted out," he said.

Liberation still feels hollow in Kuwait

KUWAIT (AP) — Five years after the Gulf war that ended the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the physical scars are gone.

The glass-covered high-rises damaged in the war have been restored. Mercedes limousines again cruise the boulevards beside the turquoise waters of the Gulf. Coffee shops are again jammed with men in white robes, chatting on cellular telephones with their brokers in New York and London.

But many Kuwaitis still feel the victory was incomplete.

"The reason that the war was waged still remains — the Iraqi regime," said Fouad Al Hashim, a prominent newspaper columnist.

Kuwaitis have kind words for the U.S.-led coalition that drove Iraq's forces out of the emirate on Feb. 26, 1991, after seven months of occupation.

And they praise the international community for maintaining a trade embargo on Iraq and demanding its compliance with U.N. resolutions.

"We're used to seeing international stances change rapidly," said Hamad Ibrahim, a civil servant. "But we're happy that the international support has remained strong."

At the same time, many Kuwaitis still do not understand why the allied firepower was not used to oust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who remains a threat in their eyes.

The Iraqi invasion destroyed 90 per cent of Kuwaiti military's equipment and installations. With its small population and its huge oil reserves, Kuwait remains vulnerable.

It has sought security by signing defence agreements with the United States, Britain, France and Russia. Last year, Kuwait spent $1 billion on defence.

Kuwaiti oil wells now pump a healthy two million barrels a day. But the huge expenses have left Kuwait with a budget deficit every year since 1991, and the government has cut back on the lavish benefits all citizens enjoyed before the invasion.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 ..... Moomins (cartoon)
14:30 ..... Wish Kid (carton)
15:00 ... Harry and the Hendersons
15:25 ..... Blue Heelers
16:00 ..... Drama — Voyagers
17:00 Children's Programme: Ordy
17:15 ..... Cupido
17:30 Scric — Les Ouchas Compagnons D'Hours
18:00 ..... Scric — Chateau Vallon
19:15 Magazine — Faut Pas Rever
19:30 ..... News Headlines
19:35 ..... Major Dad
20:00 Doc. — The Stamp of Greatness
21:10 Drama — The Glass Virgin (Ep. 11)
22:00 ..... News in English
22:25 Feature Film: "No Blame"
23:50 ..... Mancuso FBI (Pt 1)

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 ..... Fajr
06:31 ..... (Sunrise) Duha
11:46 ..... Dhuhr
14:38 ..... 'Asr
17:02 ..... Maghreb
18:23 ..... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swelleh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel.675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Cold weather conditions will prevail with skies cloudy to partly cloudy. There will be a chance for scattered showers and winds becoming westerly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman	2 / 8
Aqaba	7 / 17
Deserts	2/ 10
Jordan Valley	7 / 14

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 6, Aqaba 17 Humidity readings: Amman 100 per cent, Aqaba 31 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Afif Shukri	898863
Dr. Hisham Kan'an	790286
Dr. Osama Al Hussein	847289
Dr. Salman Al Daboubi	776751
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637666
Najib pharmacy	847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu	281741
Alquds pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi	989601
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police 192.	621111. 637777
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	607071
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111/26
Army, Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	603240/50
Amal Hospital	674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)372275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital	(02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:00 ..... Aden (RJ)
09:00 ..... Damascus (RJ)
09:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
09:30 ..... New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 ..... Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 ..... Beirut (RJ)
12:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)
14:30 ..... Colombo (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20 ..... Cairo (RJ)
17:55 ..... London, Berlin (RJ)
19:40 ..... Vienna (RJ)
20:30 ..... Jakarta, New Delhi (RJ)
02:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:40 ..... Bahrain, Doha (GF)
14:20 ..... Rome (AZ)
15:00 ..... Vienna (OS)
18:15 ..... Dubai (EK)
20:10 ..... Beirut (ME)
20:40 ..... Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:05 ..... Larnaca (CY)
22:35 ..... Cairo (MS)
22:45 ..... Athens, Beirut (OA)
23:25 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
01:15 .... London, Damascus (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:25 ..... Beirut (RJ)
06:30 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
07:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)
11:00 ..... Vienna (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:45 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
12:05 ..... London (RJ)
12:15 ..... Cairo (RJ)
16:00 ..... Paris, Brussels (RJ)
20:05 ..... Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:10 ..... Larnaca (RJ)
20:15 ..... Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:15 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)
21:00 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Jakarta (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 ..... Beirut (ME)
13:30 ..... Bahrain, Sharjah (GF)
15:20 ..... Rome (AZ)
15:50 ..... Vienna (OS)
19:15 ..... Dubai (EK)
22:55 ..... Larnaca (CY)
23:25 ..... Cairo (MS)
23:40 ..... Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:25 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 ..... Beirut, Athens (OA)
03:05 ..... London (BA)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman ... 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman .... 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/ 500
Banana	650/650
Banana (Mukammar)	580/580
Banana (imported)	850/700
Cabbage	80 / 50
Carrot	220/150
Cauliflower	100/50
Cucumbers (large)	150/ 100
Cucumbers (small)	300 / 200
Eggplant	170/ 120
Garlic	900/650
Grape Fruit	220/150
Lemon	300/200
Marrow (large)	80/ 50
Marrow (small)	130 / 80
Onion (green)	120/80
Onion (dry)	200/ 150
Orange	580/450
Pepper (hot)	480 / 300
Pepper (sweet)	480/300
Potato	230/150

Water level in King Talal dam reaches 45 mcm by Friday noon (File photo)

Scattered showers expected Saturday

Rains partly replenish dams

AMMAN (J.T.) — The recent rainfall in the country has partly replenished dam waters needed to irrigate farms in the Jordan Valley, the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) has reported.

JVA Secretary General Hashem Shboul told the Jordan Times that by noon Friday, the King Talal Dam, the largest in the country, contained 45 million cubic metres (mcm) of water, up from 40.4 mcm 10 days ago; the Wadi Al Arab Dam registered 8.4 mcm, up from 7.9 mcm, Wadi Shueib Dam 62,000 cubic metres up from 43,000; Sharhabeel Dam 2 mcm,up from 1.66 mcm; and Kafrein Dam, 450,000 cubic metres, up from 246,000.

Mr. Shboul said he expected the water levels to rise further from the continuing rainfall and melting snow.

Meanwhile, the Department of Meteorology Friday forecast more scattered rain on Saturday.

A department official said snow was still expected on the Ajloun heights Saturday, and rain would continue in many parts of the country. He warned motorists of poor visibility in the mountainous areas due to low-lying fog.

The official said temperatures could be expected to rise to a maximum of 7° Saturday and to drop to 3°C at night.

2 KILLED, 40 INJURED IN BUS ACCIDENT: A Civil Defence team rescues victims of bus accident on Azraq road Thursday, which resulted in the death of two people and the injury of 40 others. The bus, carrying a Saudi Arabian plate with 42 passengers of various Arab nationalities on board, overturned along AL Azraq-Al Omari road, near the Saudi-Jordanian borders, according to Civil Defence sources. The sources said 35 of the injured were rushed to Al Bashir Hospital in Amman, and were listed in moderate condition, while four others were listed in serious condition and were rushed to Hussein Medical Centre.

Majali reaffirms Jordan's stand

(Continued from page 1)

ters to go to polling centres in the outskirts of the Holy City to cast their ballots.

Dr. Majali described the election atmosphere as good and said that international observers felt great enthusiasm among Palestinians to participate in the elections. He called on all Palestinians to exercise tolerance and stressed the need for securing international recognition of the integrity of elections.

Dr. Majali met with Faisal Husseini, the PNA minister in charge of Jerusalem, at the Orient House and reviewed with him the views of the various Palestinian political factions towards the peace process, the Oslo agreement and the elections.

The meeting was attended by several Palestinian figures representing the Palestinian political spectrum.

In a statement to Petra after the meeting, Dr. Majali said: "The meeting reaffirms the close cooperation between Jordan and PNA and expresses our joint march in the peace process, starting with Madrid and the peace talks and ending with the Palestinian elections."

Mr. Husseini praised Jordan's role in encouraging the citizens of Jerusalem to participate in the elections and pinned great hopes on Jordanian-Israeli contacts to enable Palestinians from Jerusalem to participate freely in the elections.

Arafat visits Amman

In Amman, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker on Thursday received PNA President Yasser Arafat in the presence of Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti and member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee Hani Al Hassan.

Sharif Zeid stressed Jordan's support for the Palestinian people to enable them to secure their legitimate rights, including the establishment of their independent state.

Sharif Zeid pledged Jordan's full support for the Palestinian institutions to help them cope with requirements of the new stage in light of the Israeli withdrawal from Arab areas.

In a statement to the press, Mr. Arafat said his brief visit was aimed at explaining the points of agreement with the Israelis on controversial issues related to the elections in Hebron and Jerusalem, and the promises made by U.S. Vice President Al Gore and the European Union representatives to follow up on such issues.

Mr. Arafat said the elections had special importance because it was the first time such elections take place in the Palestinian territories. He voiced hope that the elections will take place in a brotherly and democratic atmosphere and noted a delay in the implementation of some provisions of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, particularly the one related to the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Mr. Arafat said the next stage of negotiations with the Israeli side will cover the issues of Jerusalem, refugees and settlements in addition to final borders.

Indonesian minister to begin 2-day visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Indonesian Minister of Housing Hario Nosiono arrives here Monday at the head of an Indonesian delegation on a two-day official visit. The Indonesian minister, who also heads the National Indonesian Council for Family Planning, will hold talks with Labour Minister Nader Abul Sha'ar and senior Jordanian officials on means of enhancing Jordanian-Indonesian coordination and cooperation in family planning-related issues.

Ministry registers 73 projects

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 73 industrial projects worth JD 22,920 million were registered with the Ministry of Industry and Trade in October 1995, according to ministry sources. The sources said Amman governorate won the lion's share, with 63 projects, followed by Maan with four, Zarqa two, Mafraq two, Irbid one and Balqa one.

Mandate of monitoring committee of implementation of peace treaty with Israel ends

Mulki: The foundation for mutual cooperation, coexistence has been laid

By Amy Henderson

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN – The signing Thursday of four bilateral accords between Jordan and Israel signalled the end of the mandate of the monitoring committee of the implementation of the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

President of the Jordanian side of the committee, Hani Mulki, declared the end of his committee's mandate at the signing ceremony in Aqaba, which was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Bin Shaker and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon peres and other Jordanian and Israeli officials saying:

"Today, we are pleased to announce in your presence, your Royal Highness, and in the presence of the prime ministers of both Jordan and Israel, that all agreements have been concluded as stipulated in the treaty."

"The foundation has now been laid for mutual cooperation and coexistence, and the potentials of our two peoples can now be unleashed to make up for lost time," he said.

Thirty articles of the peace treaty stated terms of mutual agreement, but left for the two nations the responsibility of hammering out 13 bilateral agreements, specifying objectives and mechanisms of implementation.

The monitoring committee, also established by the two governments following the signing of the treaty, was entrusted with overseeing the articulation of these "cooperation" agreements required by the treaty.

It is headed on the Israeli side by Shimon Shamir, Israeli ambassador to Jordan, who joined Mr. Mulki in addressing the assembly at Aqaba.

Mr. Shamir stressed the need for Jordan and Israel to work together to ensure a better future for the peoples of the two countries.

Until last week, Jordan and Israel had only signed eight of the thirteen agreements, leaving some of the most significant accords for last.

"For over a year, we have been undertaking challenging tasks in cooperation with our Israeli counterparts," said Dr. Mulki. "With ceaseless efforts, good intentions and visionary guidance from the leadership, we were able, together, to articulate concepts, elaborate articles and work out the details of the agreements stipulated in the treaty of peace," he said.

Dr. Hani Mulki

20-year old sentenced to death

By Rana Husseini

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Thursday sentenced one man to death for killing a 25-year-old man last May, and another man to 15 years in prison with hard labour for complicity in the murder.

The court tribunal, comprised of Presiding Judge Bassam Utom and Judges Kamal Falah and Ahmad Momani, sentenced 20-year-old Ahmad Deeb to death after he was found guilty of the premeditated murder of Issa A. on May 3, 1995, near the Customs Department in Amman.

The other defendant, Khalil Ibrahim, 25, received a 15-year sentence with hard labour for having participated in the murder.

According to court documents, in his confession to police after his arrest on May 1, Deeb said he had killed Issa because he was continuously harassing him to have sexual relations with him.

The documents said Deeb admitted to previously having had sexual relations with Issa, and killed him to be rid of him.

According to the court, Deeb had started planning the murder one week before the actual crime was committed. Deeb informed his friend Khalil about his plans, the court said. The two men together purchased the gun used in the crime, according to court.

The day of the murder, the document said, the two defendants drove the victim to an area near the Customs Department. "Then Ahmad, who was sitting in the back seat, drew his gun and shot Issa once in the back of the head, killing him instantly," the court said.

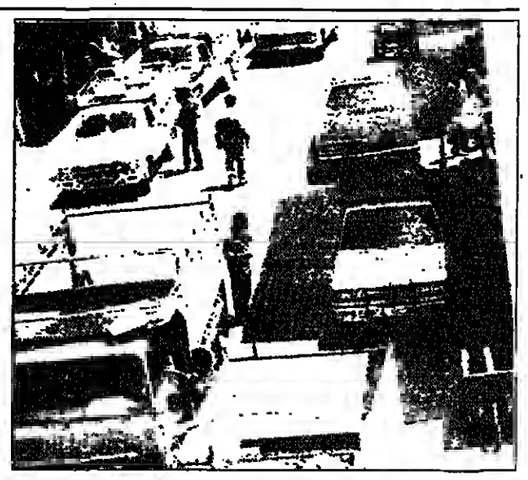
Prosecutor General Zuhair Atiyat had requested the maximum penalty for both defendants.

The verdict will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

The Court of Cassation recently ratified four execution sentences. All are currently being reviewed by the chief attorney general. They will then be referred to the Ministry of Justice, the Prime Ministry and finally to His Majesty the King for endorsement of the verdicts.

Last year, eight civilians were executed in the Kingdom, according to judicial sources.

Also Thursday, the Criminal Court sentenced a 54-year-old man to five years imprisonment with hard labour for sodomising a 12-year-old boy last August near Baqaa Camp. Taqi Edin was found guilty of molesting Yousef A. twice on Aug. 13, 1995.



Zarqa, the Kingdom's second largest city, is selected for the launching of hygiene programme (File photo)

Urban hygiene drive to be launched in Zarqa

ZARQA (Petra) — The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Ministry of Health will today (Saturday) launch a joint public awareness campaign on hygiene in urban areas in the Kingdom.

A ministry statement Friday said Zarqa was selected as the city in which the drive would be inaugurated with a seminar on implementing the first stage of the programme.

The seminar will discuss ways to achieve city hygiene, studies on the condition of services in Zarqa, industry and the environment, and the involvement of the local communities helping to maintain a clean city, according to the statement .

The Ministry of Health said the programme, which the WHO undertook in 1990, targets primarily poor and overcrowded cities — those with high population growth and negative demographic effects on the environment and municipal services.

According to the statement, the programme aims at enlisting voluntary and non-governmental organisations in helping to improve environmental and health services in their own regions and to control environmental pollution.

The ministry has formed several committees grouping public and private sector representatives who will organise several activities to achieve the campaigns aims.

AMO to issue new specifications

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) says this year it will apply internationally approved standards and specifications on all exported agricultural products to ensure increased sales, and new related regulations will be issued Monday.

At a press conference, AMO Director General Salem Lawzi said the new regulations concern the packing and packaging of fruits and vegetables, organisation of produce transport by refrigerated vehicles, and pre-export storage of produce.

Dr. Lawzi said the regulations are considered necessary to successful export marketing.

He added that Jordan expects to export at least 50,000 tonnes of agricultural products to Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas this year, in accordance with agreements reached with the two parties in 1995.

Dr. Lawzi said AMO officials and exporters last year visited Israel, Egypt, Russia and other eastern European nations to determine their requirements in terms of quality and quantity for imported produce.

AMO also organised a trip for exporters to the United States to study its market needs for grapes and fresh flowers, Dr. Lawzi said.

He said an international transportation expert was retained to assist in planning Jordan's land, sea and air transportation of export agricultural products.

Chechens in Jordan treat wounded, watch war

AMMAN (R)— Chechens recovering from wounds suffered in earlier fighting joined Jordan's tight-knit Chechen community on Thursday in watching the current battle in their homeland with a mixture of anger and pride.

"My feeling is that of any normal person who sees right and wrong," said Baha' Al Deen, a 41-year-old Chechen, his heavily bandaged foot resting on a crutch. "They took those hostages to stop the fighting, not to ask for more fighting."

Russia's Interfax news agency said Russian troops, after days of devastating artillery bombardment, had recaptured the village of Pervomaiskoye where the Chechen rebels had been holding hostages seized to force a Russian withdrawal from Chechenya.

The Chechen teacher, from a village near the capital Grozny, is among some 70 Chechens who have received medical treatment in Jordan since the Russian offensive to crush Chechen independence began in December 1994. Like others, Baha' Al Deen — who suffered shrapnel wounds and had the back of his foot blown away in a Russian air attack — would not give his full name because he will soon be returning.

Jordanian Chechens will not discuss the methods used by the casualties, all described as civilians and including children and elderly, to reach Jordan. About 30 are still receiving treatment.

The aid reflects the close ties between Chechens in their homeland and those in Jordan, a community that arrived here a century ago in what was then part of the Ottoman empire to escape Russian forces steadily expanding into the Caucasus.

"Some say there are 20,000, some say 50,000," said Yousef Bilto, a professor of haematology who is secretary of the Chechen Society. "That includes only Chechens, but if you put in all the Circassians you could get 100,000 or 200,000."

The Circassians and the Chechens, descendants of the Muslims who fled the Russian conquest of the Caucasus, are prominent in Jordan. They have three seats reserved in the 80-seat Parliament.

After the Soviet Union collapsed and Chechens sought to follow other ethnic groups conquered by Russia to independence, Jordanian Chechens established strong links.

Many families still have relatives in Chechenya and there and was a flow of people back and forth before the Russian attempt to quash the bid for independence.

The Russian onslaught produced a mixture of anger at the uncompromising ferocity and pride in the fearlessness of the rebel forces, which have repeatedly embarrassed the well-armed Russians through audacious attacks.

"We're very proud. Everyone is," Dr. Bilto, who studied in Dublin and Birmingham, said in the unheated society headquarters as snow fell outside. "They have not a one per cent suspicion that they will not win."

A year ago, young Chechens in Amman spoke of joining the fighting but the community's formal club — with about 500 official members — now emphasises the need is for medicine not fighters or weapons.

Abu Bakr, a 46-year-old Chechen farmer wearing a skull cap and fingering prayer beads, said the shrapnel wounds in his leg were healing. He has not heard from his wife or four children. "I'll go back to where my house used to stand," he said, leaning on a cane.

WHAT'S GOING ON

PLAYS

* "Unclothing and the Horse's Move" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
* "Ramadan Supermarket" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

* Recital of poems by Omar Shabaneh at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art, Gardens Street at 6: 30 p.m.

LECTURE

* Lecture (in Arabic) by artist Yasser Dweik about his artistic experience at Dorat Al Funun, Jabal Luweibdeh at 5:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Graphic works by Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik at Dorat Al Funun, Jabal Luweibdeh (until Feb. 18).

JOB OPPORTUNITY

AN INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY , BASED IN JORDAN IS SEEKING A FRENCH-UNIVERSITY GRADUATE (MALE/FEMALE)IN PHARMACY OR SCIENCE.

QUALIFIED CANDIDATES MAY SEND THEIR C.V. TO FAX NO. 817102, OR CALL TEL : 865882,3,4 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER.

Greek president charges Simitis with forming new government

ATHENS (AFP) — Prime Minister-Elect Costas Simitis Friday embarked on the task of forming a government, as press and business leaders hailed him as a pro-European moderniser, who would usher in a new era.

President Costis Stephanopoulos asked Mr. Simitis to form a government, after he defeated Akis Tsohatzopoulos, the acting prime minister, by 86 votes to 75 in a run-off ballot the day before. The two men had tied in a first round of voting.

Mr. Simitis replaces Andreas Papandreou, 76, who resigned Monday two months after being admitted to hospital, suffering from pneumonia and kidney problems, which had sucked the country into a political vacuum.

On Friday, the pro-government Greek press unanimously welcomed Mr. Simitis' election, and even less-enthusiastic opposition newspapers acknowledged the new premier had "many attributes."

The Athens Stock Exchange soared by 3.3 per cent Friday, as the business community sighed with relief.

In recent days, business leaders had made no secret of their support for Mr. Simitis, whom they consider represents the beginning of a period of economic stability.

Opinion floated in Athens business cirles, praised his election as "a turning point" and "a victory for Europe."

During Mr. Papandreou's protracted illness,. and refusal until this week to resign, business circles had warned that the country's economy could not for long remain unscathed.

Business euphoria was echoed in Friday's Greek press.

Socialist daily Eleftherotypia referred to "the first page of the new era."

It said Mr. Simitis should "impose Greece's voice on the international stage, especially within the European Union" and added that the prime minister-elect was "renowned for his pro-European stance."

The popular daily Ethnos, close to the Pasok Party, went so far as to label the election of Mr. Simitis an "historic act."

It added that Mr. Simitis had been elected in preference to Mr. Tsohatzopoulos because deputies had concluded he would "more easily win the next elections." In the 1997 poll Pasok will face the conservative New Democracy Party, which is keen to avenge its loss to the Socialists in the 1993 parliamentary polls.

New Democracy leader Miltiade Evert commented Friday that Pasok should begin to move towards "modernisation."

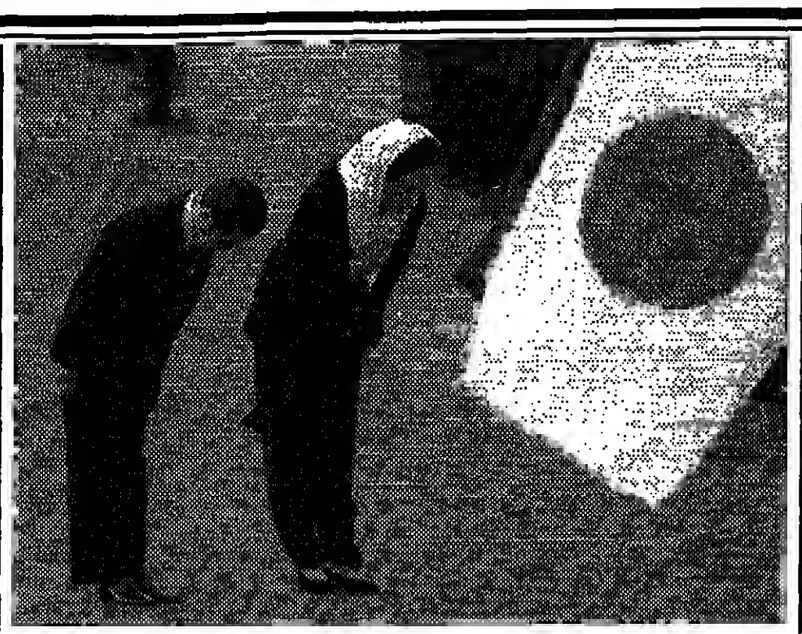
Popular daily Avriani, which in recent months has lead a vicious campaign against Mr. Papandreou's wife Dimitra, which included publishing nude photographs of her, said Mr. Simitis would disband the current pack of "crooks."

Only the Communist Rizospastis said the election of Mr. Simitis would do nothing to change the "anti-popular" policy of the Socialist government. It is a question of "the same government with new people," it added.

Mr. Simitis, a former industry minister, had been the first to call for a rapid successinn after Mr. Papandreou fell ill in late November and had criticised the prime minister for dragging Greece away from the European Union, which it joined in 1981.

He now has three days to form a new government. Meanwhile, Mr. Tsohatzopoulos, who is interior minister, will assure the premiership. He has been interim premier since Mr. Papandreou was admitted to hospital on Nov. 20.

Mr. Papandreou's prolonged hospitalisation has been marked by a tantalising series of recoveries and relapses, and threatened to split his Pasok Party, as those loyal to him counselled patience, while opposing factions clamoured for a rapid resignation.



Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto salute the national flags during a welcoming ceremony at the state guest house. Ms. Bhutto flew into Tokyo Wednesday for a four-day official visit (Reuter photo)

Bhutto warns again of nuclear showdown

TOKYO (AFP) — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has warned India anew against inviting a nuclear showdown, saying in an interview published here Friday that another Indian nuclear test would trigger a "horrible result" in South Asia.

If India wants to push ahead with the test, it will have to consider a "serious response" that "would bring a horrible result in the subcontinent," Ms. Bhutto said in an interview with Asahi Shimbun.

Ms. Bhutto implied that if India detonated a nuclear device, Pakistan may have to do the same, pushing the region into a nuclear arms race.

"There is an ambiguity in Pakistan's nuclear development plan," Ms. Bhutto told the daily. Pakistan had been saying that "it has a knowledge but does not produce" nuclear weapons, she said.

This policy has helped Pakistan keep peace with India for the last quarter of a century, she said.

But "if India detonates nuclear device, naturally, some would call for taking off this ambiguous veil."

In a recent opinion poll in Pakistan, 90 per cent of those questioned said Islamabad should produce nuclear weapons, Ms. Bhutto said, but added that this sentimeot was being resisted by the government as it was opposed to nuclear proliferation.

In contrast, India was continuing development of short- and middle-range missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads, she said.

India, Pakistan's traditional rival, exploded a nuclear device in 1974. The New York Times reported last month that India was gearing to conduct another test. The report was dismissed by New Delhi as "speculative and baseless."

Ms. Bhutto said her country had proposed declaring South Asia a nuclear-free zone and holding a tension-easing meeting among Pakistan, India, China, Russia and the United States.

"India is not responding" to the idea, she complained.

She told her Japanese counterpart Ryutaro Hashimoto Thursday that Pakistan hoped the Group of Seven (G7) industrial powers could act as intermediaries between Pakistan and India, which have fought three wars in less than 50 years.

Ms. Bhutto arrived in Japan Wednesday for a four-day visit to meet with political and economic leaders. She was scheduled to meet Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko Friday.

She last visited Japan in February 1989 to attend the state funeral of late Emperor Hirohito.

Christopher warns Russia on reforms

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has warned that Russia's integration with Western institutions could be jeopardised if it does not abide by international norms and continue reforms.

In his first public comments since Moscow's military assault on Chechen rebels and President Boris Yeltsin's continuing purge of reformers, Mr. Christopher voiced what appears to be a growing sense of alarm in the United States over post-Communist Russia.

"Recent events reflect troubling signs of Russian reform under strain," he said in a speech to Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

The speech, released by the State Department, was designed to highlight U.S. foreign policy accomplishments and presage President Bill Clinton's approach to this subject in 1996, an election year.

In one of the most pessimistic recent assessments by a senior U.S. official, Mr. Christopher said that four years into the post-Soviet period he remained concerned that the success of Russia's transformation from communism was "not assured."

While the economy was increasingly governed by market principles and free elections were becoming a fact of life, "Russia has not yet overcome the ruinous legacy of seven decades under communism visible in crime, corruption and poverty," he said.

Mr. Christopher said that when he holds his first meeting with new Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov in Geneva next month, "I will tell him that the United States is determined to continue working with Russia on the common challenges we face."

But he said he would also "make clear that Russia's integration with the institutions of the West, which is in our mutual interest, depends on Russia's willingness to abide by international norms and to stay on the path of reform."

Addressing China, Mr. Christopher said that if Beijing wanted a lasting, productive relationship with Washington it must "take meaningful steps to address areas of our concern and to respect internationally accepted principles."

Japanese Socialists change party name

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese Socialist Party members voted Friday to change the Japanese name of their party to correspond to its official English translation which was switched to Social Democratic Party of Japan in 1991.

The move, transforming the name "Shakaito" to "Shakai minshuto", came 90 years after the party was first founded in 1906 and was billed as one of the key outcomes of a special one-day convention following the re-election of former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama as party chairman earlier in the week.

Mr. Murayama, who banded the reigns of the three-party coalition to Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leader Ryutaro Hashimoto last week after more than 18 months in office, warned there was "no future" for a party that did not change.

"We have to stand up to form a new party that can responsibly share managing the government," he said." There will be no future for the Socialist Party if it sticks to old ideas. So we must carry out reforms in keeping with the times."

The party also adopted a new platform which described it as being in a "transitional phase" and at an "historical turning point" in Japanese politics. Held a day after separate conventions by the LDP and the opposition New Frontier Party, the Socialist convention was seen as a prelude to attempts to form a new broader-based party before the next general election.

Mr. Murayama, whose party was devastated in upper-house elections last year, is keen on forging an alliance with New Party Sakigake, led by former Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura and the smallest party in the current coalition.

Although a general election does not have to be held until the middle of next year, a poll is widely expected to be held this year.

The Japan Socialist Party was founded by a coalition of radical and moderate Socialists in 1906. The government disbanded the party a year later following calls for "direct action" by radical members.

The two factions founded a series of short-lived parties and engaged in underground activities until after World War II when it was reborn in 1945.

U.N. landmines conference makes progress, but problems remain

GENEVA (AFP) — The president of a U.N. conference on restricting the use of anti-personnel mines worldwide said Friday that progress had been made on reaching a compromise agreement, but details remained to be ironed out.

The conference seeks to amend a protocol on antipersonnel mines contained in a 1980 convention that sets out strict guidelines on the use of inhumane weapons, and in particular press for the convention to be extended to cover civil wars as well as international conflicts.

"We have a new text which in my view is a possible compromise. We don't have to agree about now, we will give it to the politicians in May," said Sweden's Johan Molander.

He said delegates had agreed on "an acceptable framework but the devil is in the details and there are big details."

This week's meeting was a technical session after a similar conference here last year broke down over objections from major mine producers such as China and Pakistan.

Mr. Molander has proposed that the interim text forces producers to include in anti-personnel mines a minimum of 8 grams (0.28 ounce) of metal to make them detectable, in particular for mine clearance experts.

There are an estimated 100 million landmines in the world which kill or maim around 20,000 civilians every year.

On Friday afternoon, Mr. Molander was to urge delegates to include a total ban on "anti-detectable" landmines in the final text.

The text, due to be approved Friday afternoon, stipulates that mines not located in marked zones auto-destruct in 30 days, or that they neutralise within 120 days with their batteries expiring at the end of the period.

Mr. Molander proposed a transitional period of eight years for producers to bring themselves in line with the new norms if they are adopted in May by the 55 participating states.

He said some nations hoped for "grace periods" of up to 20 years.

Ghali demands hostage release

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has demanded the "immediate release" of hostages held by separatist rebels in Indonesia's Irian Jaya jungle.

In a statement by his spokesman issued late Thursday, Dr. Ghali said he was following the hostage-taking with concern, and noted that a U.N. Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) officer was among those held.

He called for the release "of the UNESCO staff member and all the other hostages who were engaged in activities supporting environmental conservation" in the region when they were seized.

He also called for the "early and peaceful settlement of the problem."

Two missionaries Friday flew to meet the rebels who are still holding 14 hostages after kidnapping 26 on Jan. 8.

Six are Europeans working on an environmental-linked scientific expedition in Irian Jaya being carried out in conjunction with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

They are four Britons — Daniel Start, 21, William Oates, 22, Annette Van Der Kolk, 21 and Anna McIvor, 20 — and WWF official Mark Van Der Wal and UNESCO environment official Martha Klein, both of the Netherlands.

The kidnappers, according to the military, are a faction of a separatist group called the Free Papua Organization (OPM) which has been fighting for an independent state since the former Dutch colony of Western Papua became the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya in 1964.

Chiapas rebels, government reach tentative agreements

SAN ANDRES, Mexico (AFP) — Zapatista rebel and government representatives reached a series of tentative agreements on Indian rights and culture Friday, sources close to the talks said.

In a joint statement they said a "new social pact" was needed to establish a fresh relationship between the government and Mexico's indigenous population.

Both sides agreed that the right to self-determination and to an autonomous region for Mexico's Indian populations, one of the Zapatista National Liberation Army's chief demands, should be a constitutional issue.

They also agreed after nine days of talks to strive for the social and economic improvement of the indigenous masses — between seven and 12 million — and to promote their participation in the political system.

Finally, the negotiators agreed on the right of indigenous people to set up their own justice system to settle internal disputes, as well as organisations for their economic, educational and physical advancement.

The agreements in principle will be submitted to consultations by both sides before they go up for final approval when the sides next meet here on Feb. 13.

No agreement has been signed so far in the eleven rounds of rebel-government negotiations begun in April of last year.

Zapatista Commander Tacho, one of the rebel negotiators, welcomed the agreements but regretted that it took "an indigenous army, war and death" for the government to "commit itself in documents to promote our existence and our rights."

Zapatista guerrillas staged a bloody uprising in January 1994, forcing the government to negotiate improvements for the mostly indigenous people of Chiapas and, by extention, to other Indian groups around the country.

Commander Tacho said the Zapatistas would "listen to the word of our people on these commitments and proposals."

He warned, however, that "words and commitments no matter how firm and serious will serve no purpose if our people continue to be harassed."

"We rose up to demand justice ... that can only come about with profound changes in political, social and economic relations ... The government now has the possibility to show that war is not the way" to achieve those goals, the Zapatista commander said.

Officials disclaim Rao role in bribery

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian government officials Friday poured cold water on an opposition leader's claim that Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao could be involved in a deepening corruption scandal.

The parliamentary leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Atal Behari Vajpayee, said Thursday one of the alleged masterminds of the black money scheme told investigators rao had received over 30 million rupees ($850,000) of tainted money.

Two senior government officials who declined to be identified told Reuters Friday that one of the prime suspects had implicated Mr. Rao in the case, which this week forced the resignation of three cabinet ministers.

But they said the suspect only belatedly named Mr. Rao after making no mention of him during more than 20 sessions of interrogation spread over two years.

Mr. Rao's name was not in any of the diaries or files belonging to the suspected leaders of the bribes-for-favours scheme which form the basis of the investigation, they said.

"This is an election year and many of these things will go on," said one official, attributing political motives to Mr. Vajpayee's remarks.

This week the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) charged seven politicians, six of them former cabinet ministers, in connection with the $18 million "hawala", or black money, case.

BJP President L.K. Advani quit his parliament seat after he was named, saying the charges were politically motivated.

Despite losing three cabinet ministers to the scandal, Mr. Rao has been widely perceived as scoring political points in the rapidly unfolding case.

Key rivals including Mr. Advani have been charged and thus tripped up just as a campaign for general elections, expected in April, gets under way.

Mr. Vajpayee dramatically raised the stakes in the case by saying a prime suspect had accused Mr. Rao of involvement.

"There is another shocking aspect of the sordid case," he said in a statement released late Thursday.

"The CBI has recorded a statement of one of the two Jain brothers in which he has said that the prime minister had received over 30 million rupees from them," Mr. Vajpayee said.

A spokesman for Mr. Rao's ruling Congress Party denied the accusation. "there is no substance in that," V.N. Gadgil said.

The CBI, the federal police agency, has charged three Jain brothers and another member of the family with money laundering and violating a 1988 anti-corruption law.

Four diaries and two files belonging to the Jains contained the names of 115 politicians and civil servants whom authorities say may have been involved in the bribes-for-favours scheme.

Government officials told Reuters that one of the businessmen, S.K. Jain, told investigators after he was arrested last March that money intended for Mr. Rao was given to two intermediaries in May 1991.

At that time Mr. Rao was president of the All-India Congress Committee, the party's plenary body. He became prime minister in June 1991.

But Mr. Jain had made no mention of Mr. Rao during more than 20 previous interrogation sessions starting in 1993 and Mr. Rao's name was not in any of the diaries or files, the officials said.

Asked why Mr. Rao's name had come up, one senior official said: "Certain people wanted to widen the scope to prevent the entire investigation."

Another senior official, asked if authorities planned to investigate S.K. Jain's allegation regarding Mr. Rao, said: "So far the CBI has not looked into that because the whole investigation is based on the diaries."

Jackson-Presle marriage break up

LOS ANGELES (R) They said it would ne last, and it didn't — a 20 months of marria Lisa Marie Presley and superstar Michael Jack are splitting up. The dau ter of late rock 'n' roll l end Elvis Presley officia dumped the self-annoin "king of pop" Thursd filing for divorce on grounds of "irreconcilia differences." it marked beginning of the end fo match made in tabl beaven. So hizarre were first reports of their sec 1994 wedding in Dominican Republic d Jackson's own represen tives originally dismisse as a wild hoax. When reports proved true, so critics contended that was all an elaborate publ ity stunt to divert attenti from allegations of ch molestation that were th swirling around Jacks Despite months rumours, Presley's divo filing Thursday appeared catch Jackson's hatl hardened puhlic-relatio team off guard. Once th regrouped, the singe longtime publicist, L Solters, issued a stateme saying, "Michael Jacks and Lisa Marie Presl have mutually agreed to their separate wa However, they rema good friends." At "Grac land," the opulent Presl estate outside Memphi Tennessee, one wom tourist summed up wh many fans of the king rock 'n' roll' may ha been thinking: "I bet Elv would be happy." Presley attorneys said they expect "very simple and cle divorce," and legal exper say the couple is all b certain to have an ironcl prenuptial agreement th will keep things from ge ting messy.

Duchess of York i asked: 'who's paying the bill?'

WASHINGTON. (R) With rumours of massi debts dogging her f England, the Duchess York was in Washingt Friday, along with a del gation from London's pre corps, the Washington Po reported. The former Sar Ferguson, estranged wi of Prince Andrew, was Washington for Friday meeting of the millenniu society, which rais money for internation scholarships, according the newspaper. When t duchess checked into t swank Four Seasons Hot with daughters Prince Beatrice, 7, and Prince Eugene, 5, Thursday, me bers of the press shoute "Who's paying the bill?" isn't the Millenniu Society, Cate Wyatt, o chairman of the societ told the Post, which repo ed that suites at the Fo Seasons cost from $600 $1,600 a night. The mana er of the hotel refused tell the newspaper how t bill was being paid. Aft Friday's meeting, t duchess is to head nor the Post said, to attend $500-a-plate fund-raiser Connecticut. The event for Chances For Childre a charity she founde There was also a possibi ty she and her daught would spend "a few day in New York.

Blood pressure puts 'Superman' hospital

NEW YORK (R) "Superman" star Christ pher Reeve, paralys since a horseback ridi accident last May, w being treated in hospital erratic blood pressure a constipation, the actor a hospital officials s Wednesday. In a statem released through Northern Westches Medical Centre in Kisco, New York. Ree said he had autonon dyrseflexia, a conditi that causes blood pressi to swing from high to l and if not treated can le to a heart attack or strok

Russians count the cost of Dagestan battle

OUTSIDE PERVOMAISKAYA, Russia (AFP) — Russian forces searched for missing hostages Friday after their gruelling assault on Pervomaiskaya as Moscow announced that less than two-thirds of the 320 Chechen rebels who fought there had been killed or captured.

President Boris Yeltsin said the hostage-takers numbered 320 when they arrived in the Dagestani village near the Chechen border on Jan. 10, and that "153 were killed during the Russian assault and 30 were captured."

Mr. Yeltsin did not say what happened to the 137 other separatists, who are fighting for Chechenya's independence from Russia.

However, his statement appeared to confirm reports from Chechen sources and former hostages that some guerrillas had managed to escape through Russian lines.

Chechen separatist spokesman Movladi Udugov said a number of the separatists had managed to return to neighbouring Chechenya with hostages, but he did not specify how many.

Mr. Yeltsin told journalists in Moscow that of 120 hostages held by the rebels in Pervomaiskaya, 24 were killed. He described it as a "minimal loss" in such an operation.

On Thursday he said 82 hostages had survived the assault and 18 were still missing but a search had been launched for them. Seven policemen who were held captive in the village but fled under fire were found Friday, Mr. Yeltsin said.

Earlier, police in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk said 12 special forces policemen from the city, who were among a group of 37 captured by the Chechen guerrillas at Pervomaiskaya, were still missing.

Yeltsin said 26 Russian soldiers were killed in the four-day assault, which involved several commando assaults and a withering bombardment with helicopter gunships, tanks and multiple rocket launchers.

Justifying the assault, Mr. Yeltsin said "mad dogs must be shot dead."

The Russian leader vowed that federal forces would "start destroying the strongholds" of separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev's fighters, "but there will be no all-out war."

"The bases which our (special) services have discovered with mountains of arms threaten the whole of Chechenya with an explosion," Mr. Yeltsin said.

Earlier he said Pervomaiskaya was a rebel base, with underground fortifications and huge stocks of weapons.

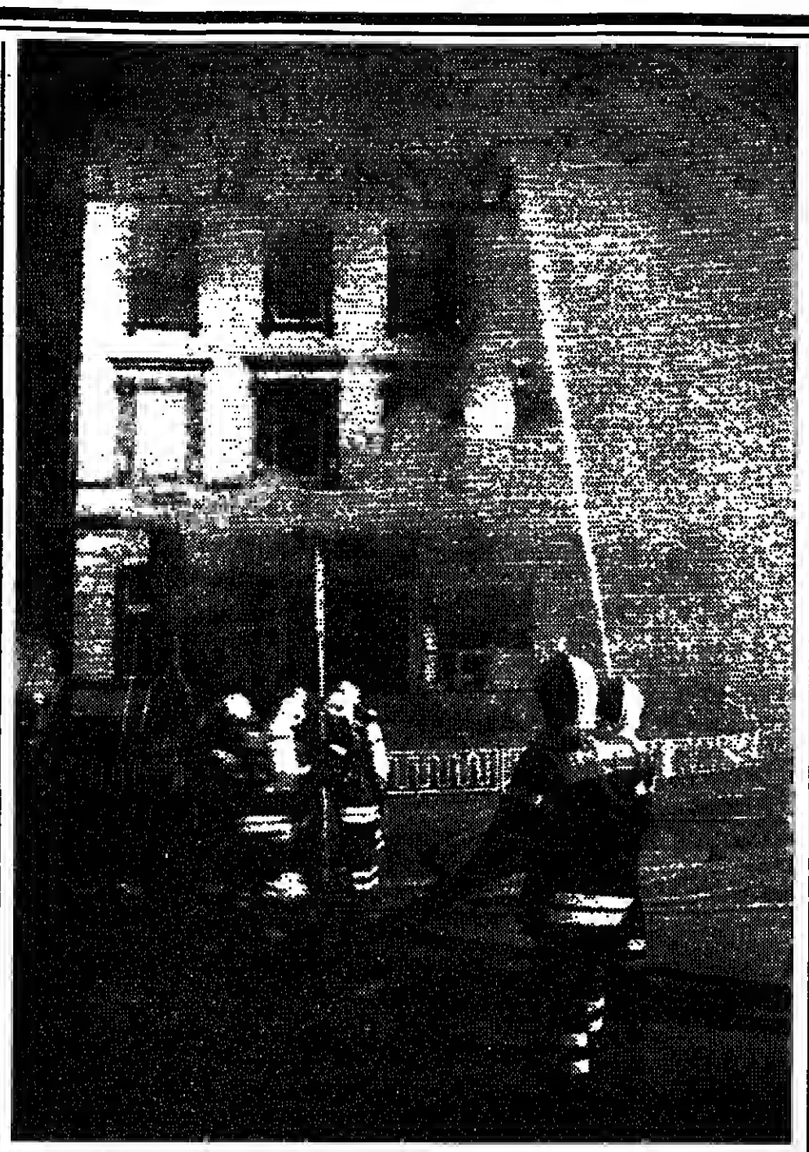
An Interior Ministry colonel said snipers may still be hiding in the village or surroundings.

The Russian military command said "mopping up" operations were continuing in Pervomaiskaya following the four-day assault which began Monday.

Moscow NTV television reported Thursday that the leader of the Chechen rebel group, Salman Raduyev, was among a number of separatists who managed to flee the village during the bombardment with some hostages.

The television reported that he was offering to exchange hostages he still held for his wounded men left behind and captured by the Russians.

Some former hostages told AFP that guerrillas had broken out through the Russian lines with a number of their captives under heavy fire early Thursday.



German firemen try to extinguish a fire at a foreigners hostel in the northern German port city of Luebeck, on Thursday. Seven people, including two small children died and twenty were seriously injured. Most of the occupants of the building were asylum seekers from Syria, Lebanon, Zaire and Togo. Police said they had detained two people shortly afterwards (Reuter photo)

Anxious Germans await word on cause of fatal hostel fire

LUEBECK, Germany (R) — Firemen resumed the search Friday for victims of the fatal fire in a foreigners' hostel in the German port city of Luebeck, and for clues to establish whether the fire was an accident or a racist attack.

Police said they would resume the interrogation of three young men seen shortly afterwards near the scene of the fire, which killed at least 10 people in the worst catastrophe ever to hit a German hostel for foreigners.

West German Radio said at least four occupants of the house, occupied by refugees from Zaire, Togo, Syria, and Lebanon and ethnic German immigrants from Poland, were fighting for their lives in hospital. More than 50 people were hurt in the blaze.

Country-wide, politicians and commentators continued to hope the blaze would not be the latest in a series of horrific racist attacks following unification in 1990, including the fatal firebombings of Turkish homes in Moelln and Solingen and two attacks on the synagogue in Luebeck itself.

"I still hope that this will perhaps turn out not to be an act of right-wing extremism carried out by humans but simply an accident — even though that is just as bad for the victims," Ignatz Bubis, leader of Germany's Jewish community, told national ZDF Television.

Around the gutted white four-storey house in Luebeck's harbour area, demolition firms pulled up cranes to try to dismantle parts of the roof and upper storeys.

Police have said several occupants of the house are still missing, but the danger of a collapse has prevented rescue teams entering the building to search further.

Investigators also want to get inside to hunt for clues to establish the cause of the fire, which they say could still turn out to be a simple accident or an electrical fault.

However, the speed with which the flames spread through the building, giving many occupants no chance of escaping have led police to suspect arson.

Prosecutors have already opened an investigation into possible murder and arson, but declined to say whether this is directed against the three young men being questioned, one of them a shaven-headed black-hooded skinhead.

Police must decide whether to bring the three men aged 16 to 19 before a judge to have them placed under arrest to allow them to be detained longer.

Luebeck Mayor Michael Bouteiller, whose city has in the past two years seen the first firebomb attacks on a Jewish synagogue since the Nazi era, called townspeople to a rally at noon (1100 GMT).

The fire came only two days after visiting Israeli President Ezer Weizman urged Germany in a speech to parliament to guard against racism and stamp out any hint of neo-Nazi activity.

German President Roman Herzog gave Germans a reminder of their special responsibility to avoid the horrors of the past in a speech to parliament marking the day of remembrance for victims of Nazism.

"Germans' future responsibility to ensure such things will never happen again is especially great, because so many Germans have once made themselves guilty."

Top Nigerian political activists distance themselves from crash

LAGOS (R) — Leading Nigerian political activists Friday dissociated themselves from a group that has claimed responsibility for a plane crash which killed the eldest son of the country's military ruler and 13 other people.

A previously unheard of group calling itself the United Front for Nigeria's Liberation (UFNL) said in a statement Thursday it caused the crash near the northern city of Kano in which Ibrahim Abacha, the first of General Sani Abacha's 10 children, and his friends perished.

The claim could not be independently verified.

"I have never heard of this group and certainly the National Conscience Party (NCP) does not know them," radical Lagos lawyer Gani Fawehinmi, a leading government opponent, told Reuters.

An official of the umbrella Campaign for Democracy (CD) pressure group, which has opposed military rule in Nigeria since June 1993 when the army annulled a presidential vote to restore democracy, said the group was not involved in the crash.

"We will make a statement later but I can say we have no hand in this," the official said by telephone.

UFNL said in its statement to a foreign news agency its units carried out the attack with which it was signalling intensification of the campaign to remove Gen. Abacha's government "by every means possible".

Mr. Fawehinmi's NCP has staged several anti-government activities since November when the Abacha government drew international condemnation for the hanging of nine minority rights activists including the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa for murder.

"We neither condemn nor support violence but we believe in mobilising the people against this Mr. Fawehinmi said, adding: "Others can do what they think best but NCP will not engage in violence."

The head of the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), which advocates an end to army rule and greater respect for individual freedoms, said his group was not involved in the crash and did not support violence.

"We hold conferences to discuss issues and not blow up planes," said Clement Nwankwo, CRP's executive director.

There has been no government response to the claim, which is a new dimension to the political turmoil that has engulfed Nigeria since the poll annulment.

Moshood Abiola, the millionaire businessman believed to have won the scrapped vote, has been detained since June 1994 when he defied the military and proclaimed himself president.

Riots and strikes to secure his release and installation as president have been brutally suppressed.

Tigers on the run as Sri Lankan troops mount jungle offensive

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas have abandoned several jungle bases in eastern Sri Lanka in the face of ground, air and artillery attacks, the military and rebels said Friday.

Guerrillas of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had withdrawn from several hideouts in the eastern coastal district of Batticaloa as elite commandos fanned into the jungles Thursday, officials said.

"There has been no report of any contacts with the enemy so far," a defence source said, but "the search and destroy mission is still in progress."

Elite army commandos moved against suspected LTTE positions amid monsoon rains which had triggered floods and inundated several low-lying areas, officials said.

For its part, the LTTE in a statement sent here from its London office Friday charged that the military was using air and artillery attacks against civilian targets at the launch of the offensive Wednesday.

"Two supersonic military aircraft belonging to the Sri Lankan Air Force also dropped bombs on Vaharai (in the east). The Vaharai Hospital received a direct hit," the LTTE said. "Three civilians were seriously wounded."

Defence sources said the latest military action was prompted by a wave of rebel attacks in the eastern region following the fall of the Tigers' main bastion of Jaffna in the north of the country earlier last month.

More than 50 people have been killed in sporadic violence in the east since the LTTE lost Jaffna to security forces after nearly 50 days of fighting that claimed the lives of 500 soldiers and 2,000 rebels by official count.

The Tamil separatist struggle has claimed an estimated 50,000 lives in the past 23 years and all political attempts to appease minority Tamils have failed.

Meanwhile aide workers said Friday Sri Lanka could face a new medical and refugee crisis should the 13-year-old ethnic war escalate in the east.

The teaching hospital at Batticaloa, 190 kilometres northeast of Colombo, has just one general surgeon and is drastically short of drugs and sterile rooms as well as soap and gowns, a Western doctor working here said.

Civilians, scattered through vast rural areas under control of the LTTE, would either suffer huge casualties or take to their heels should the army attacks mount, aid workers said.

"Since the army took Jaffna, there have been rumours here all the time that the army is about to attack in the east," a medical relief worker at the hospital said. "If that happens, if there are 50 people suddenly needing operations, there is no way we could cope."

The Western doctor said there was a severe shortage of drugs, antibiotics and pain killers, and only three operating theatres and 160 surgical beds which were already 70 per cent full.

The Ministry of Health admitted there was a shortage of surgeons, but said there was an adequate supply of drugs.

"There is no shortage of drugs. But there is a shortage of surgeons which is there all over the country," Health Minister A.H.M. Fowzie told Reuters.

Mr. Fowzie said the government usually flies in additional surgeons to areas affected by war, at short notice.

Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte last week said the armed forces were planning fresh offensives in the east to beat the LTTE into submission and force them back to the negotiating table.

"When they say the east, they mean Batticaloa district," said veteran human rights campaigner Father Harry Miller. "But there's not true security for the people from the Tigers. So we must live with the Tigers."

Security around Batticaloa deteriorated after troops were redeployed in the northern Jaffna peninsula to take Jaffna City, the cultural and spiritual capital of the LTTE's would-be home in the north and east.

The town itself shuts down at dusk and no one moves outside the urban area until morning when major roads have to be laboriously checked for landmines and rebels.

The 80 kilometre journey from central Polonnaruwa to Batticaloa, where nearby shell fire could be heard Friday morning, took people four hours by car, at one point driving through the middle of an army clearing operation.

The doctor said some of his patients from outlying villages wanted to stay put in the Batticaloa Hospital for fear of new fighting.

"There could be a major refugee crisis (if the violence starts) but not as big as in Jaffna," a Western relief worker said. "The rural areas are full of civilians."

An estimated 250,000 Tamils fled the Jaffna peninsula during the seven-week army operation to take the town.

"If the attacks start in the east, providing fuel and food will be the biggest problem," a spokesman for the government-run Human Rights Task Force said.

A Batticaloa member of parliament for the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front, Joseph Parajasingham, said the LTTE had basic support of about 40 to 50 per cent of the Tamil population who make up about 75 per cent of Batticaloa district.

The government this week officially released its devolution package for minority Tamils, offering them wide-ranging executive, legislative and judicial powers.

Family drama erupts at Indian politician's funeral

HYDERABAD, India (AFP) — An ugly family drama erupted Friday at the mass funeral here of an Indian movie star-turned-politician when his second wife was forced to leave the ceremonies by two of his sons.

Thousands of mourners watched in disbelief as two sons from the first marriage of the late N.T. Rama Rao, prevented Lakshmi Parvathi, the divorcee who married him in 1994, from joining the funeral in this southern city.

Ms. Parvathi wailed and protested loudly as she was pushed around by supporters of two of the seven sons of Rama Rao, who died aged 73 Thursday. She was then thrown out of a flower-bedecked open truck.

"Despite my repeated pleas to have a last glimpse of my husband, I was pushed out of the vehicle," a weeping Parvathi said

Before leaving in disgust from a packed sports stadium where Rama Rao's body lay in state.

"It is a pre-planned conspiracy to keep me away from the final rites of my late husband," she complained. "While I have become a widow, the last rites are being performed in the name of his first wife."

Hundreds of thousands of grief-stricken fans, including a galaxy of movie stars and politicians, paid homage to Rama Rao, who died at his home here early Thursday following a heart attack.

Rama Rao, who was popularly known as "NTR," was one of the country's top opposition leaders and was thrice chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, a sprawling southern state of 70 million people.

A charismatic film star who played the lead role in 320 movies until he became a politician in 1982, Rama Rao married Ms. Parvathi, who came into his life with a view to writing his biography, against his family's wishes.

Rama Rao's first wife died in 1983. He had seven sons and four daughters from her.

A family feud ensued with one of Rama Rao's sons-in-law leading a revolt last year by legislators of Rama Rao's Telegu Desam Party in a bid to oust him as chief minister of Andhra Pradesh.

The son-in-law, Chandrababu Naidu, went on to become the state's chief minister with the backing of Rama Rao's sons, accusing Ms. Parvathi of creating the family rift. However Rama Rao refused to divorce her.

For the funeral Friday life came to a standstill across Hyderabad, the state capital. Police said all shops, hotels and schools were shut across the coastal state in Rama Rao's memory.

Black flags swirled atop street lights and public buildings, and photographs of the dead politician lined streets, flanked by traditional oil lamps and joss sticks.

Witnesses reported minor incidents of violence here as enraged NTR followers beat up some shopkeepers who had opened for business.

A teenage girl reportedly committed suicide after learning of Mr Rao's death.

A crowd-puller for decades, Rao joined the regional Telugu-language film studio in 1949 playing mainly mythological roles. He formed the Telugu Desam Party to fight for the rights of Andhra Pradesh's native Telugu-speaking people.

He first stormed to office in 1983, and was last returned to power in November 1994 when he routed Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party in legislative elections.

Until his death, he was chairman of the centrist National Front Alliance, one of the three major contenders for power in parliamentary elections expected in April. He was preparing for the polls when he died.

U.N. fears refugee emergency on Tanzania border

DAR ES SALAAM (R) — The head of the U.N. Refugee agency in Tanzania said Friday he feared a "massive emergency" as thousands of refugees fleeing ethnic violence in Burundi massed close to the border with Tanzania.

Andrew Sokiri told Reuters that unconfirmed reports suggested as many as 100,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees had been forced by fighting to flee their camp in northern Burundi and were now massing on the Tanzanian frontier.

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said shooting by unidentified gunmen had brought chaos to Mugano Camp, home to 15,000 refugees.

The federation, which managed five camps in Burundi with a population of 150,000 refugees, said it was reviewing the security of its staff and resources in Burundi as a result of the serious security incident.

Mr. Sokiri, UNHCR representative in Tanzania, said: "We are concerned that if it continues, we do not know the extent to which it could lead to a massive emergency."

At least 15,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees crossed the border to Tanzania from Burundi and more arrived overnight despite the fact that Tanzania sealed its borders to refugees last March, UNHCR officials said.

The federation said its teams had treated at its hospital in Benaco Camp, Tanzania, eight people who suffered from gunshot wounds, four of whom were in critical condition.

In Geneva Thursday, the U.N. Human rights investigator in Burundi called for a global plan to force the government to halt "genocide by dripfeed" — of face possible sanctions.

Paulo Sergio Pinheiro said if Burundi authorities failed to heed the warning in the coming months, the international community should consider withdrawing humanitarian aid workers.

"Everyone is waiting for a second Rwanda. It is here already. The figures are shocking," Mr. Pinheiro told reporters.

Burundi's majority Hutu and minority Tutsi is the same ethnic mix in Rwanda, where up to a million Tutsi and allied Hutu were slaughtered by hardline Hutu and troops in 1994.

The refugees comprised Rwandan Hutus who fled Mugano Refugee Camp in northeast Burundi and there was also a large number of Burundian Hutus also trying to cross the border.

Continued fighting between the mainly Tutsi Burundian army and renegade Hutu rebel militia was the cause of the refugee exodus, according to Tanzanian newspaper reports this week.

To cope with the emergency, UNHCR established a transit camp at Keza in the northwestern Ngara region to which refugees who cross the border are being taken.

But U.N. officials acknowledged the difficulty in meeting their mandate of caring for refugees while keeping good relations with Tanzanian officials who have closed the border.

Mr. Sokiri praised cooperation with Tanzania so far: "The border is closed with a human fence. What that means is that there are exceptional cases and women, children and vulnerable persons are being allowed in," Mr. Sokiri said.

Some 712,000 refugees who fled fighting in Rwanda and Burundi and currently located in camps in western Tanzania and their presence causes friction between Tanzania, Burundi and U.N. and other agencies that care for them.

Tanzania recently beefed up its security presence on the frontier and President Benjamin Mkapa has set the return home of the refugees as a key foreign policy objective.

Last year, three UNHCR officials were expelled from Tanzania for alleged misconduct and the Burundian ambassador was also asked to leave because of border violations by the Burundian army in pursuit of Hutu rebels hiding in Tanzania.

Meanwhile government workers in Bujumbura Friday pursued a strike called by Tutsi extremists in a bid to oust Burundi's Hutu president, but banks, grocery shops and the central market were open, and buses and taxis were running.

The city was tense, with armed soldiers patrolling in pairs and a tank guarding the Defence Ministry.

Some government departments were working with skeleton staffs, but others were closed.

The general strike was called Monday by Tutsis who accused President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya of aiding militiamen of the Hutu majority who clash regularly with the Tutsi-dominated army.

Jordan Times

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Mission possible

THE SANCTIONS that the U.N. imposed on Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which have so far had a devastating effect on the Iraqi people, seem at last to be affecting the regime. Two decisions taken by the Iraqi government recently point to this. The first is the decision to sell 25 per cent of state cars, starting with cars that are used by officials. The second was the government's acceptance, in principle, to consider limited sales of Iraqi oil under the provision of U.N. Security Council Resolution 986 to raise funds for humanitarian needs and to compensate "war victims." So far the Iraqi government has rejected that resolution because it presumably infringes on Iraqi sovereignty. All these Iraqi adjustments not-with standing, the Security Council, which recently decided to send a fact-finding mission to Iraq in early March, does not look to be ready for a total or even a partial lifting of the sanctions. The U.S. and the other four permanent council members seem to be determined to keep the boycott in place until Iraq "abided by all the council resolutions." These resolutions, depending on how they are interpreted, could keep Iraq under the embargo for years to come.

Meanwhile, the sanctions, which at last seem to be biting on the regime, have for five years been turning ordinary Iraqis into a miserable, wretched population. As far as they are concerned there is no end in sight for their plight. The security council's fact-finding mission is not expected to come up with any information about the situation in Iraq that has not so far been revealed by the numerous Western non-governmental organisations.

The standoff between the Iraqi regime and its antagonists in the West and the region will certainly continue and the Iraqis will suffer with no hope their plight will end soon. The Iraqi opposition in the meantime seems to be unable to provide the alternative either for the people of Iraq or for the enemies of the Iraqi regime. The most viable among the opposition, the Kurdish factions in the north, are already locked in a bitter internal fighting. The other factions are scattered all over the world and most are not even on speaking terms with each other.

It goes without saying that unless the opposition starts a meaningful dialogue among its different factions, closes its ranks and starts a campaign that would first and foremost aims to end the sanctions; misery of the Iraqi people will continue and then put Iraq on a new path of reconciliation among its own people and between it and the world.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Fahed Al Fanek, a writer in Al Ra'i, criticised the convening of an Arab Thought Forum (ATF) session in Amman to discuss the consequences of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which, he wrote, lasted only six months and is no more a question for the Arab World. What needs to be discussed is the question of the continued starvation of 20 million Iraqis who have suffered from the U.N. embargo for six years. Furthermore, Mr. Fanek criticised the delegates in attendance for blaming the invasion of Kuwait on the absence of democracy in Iraq and on the Iraqi ruler in Baghdad. He said that while part of this theory is true, the countries of the ATF delegates are no better: they too lack democratic systems. He said Jordan, which was accused by Arab states as having sided with Iraq, has been forced to apologise for adopting an honourable and national stand. The ATF which was also accused of the same sin is now trying to apologise for its former nationalist stand, he said. The writer noted that Jordanian diplomacy has caused Amman to lose Iraq without winning over the Gulf states and without changing Kuwait's stand towards Amman. He said that the ATF is following suit because its members represent Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Kuwait, who are trying to steer the debates in a manner that would distort historic facts.

A writer in Al Dustour urged the government to adopt a national dynamic plan focused on marketing Jordanian agricultural products in European markets and opening new markets for these products in other parts of the world. Taher Al Adwan said the government ought to adopt a plan ensuring high quality agricultural products that can compete with those of Israel, Cyprus and Tunisia in European markets even if it requires the allocation of special budgets. To help Jordanian farmers attain that goal. The writer said that it is illogical to leave the farmers facing the plight of being unable to market their products because of political differnces among Arab countries, and it is illogical to see farmers falling victim to the whims of politicians, consequently causing heavy national losses for the Kingdom. He said that by supporting farmers and ensuring compensation for them in case of loss, the government will not only enable Jordan to maintain its agricultural growth but will also help spare the unemployment problem further aggravation.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilan

Setting the ground for beneficial cooperation

THE SIGNING on Thursday of four agreements between Jordan and Israel set the final stones in the ground for close cooperation and interaction between the two countries in line with the peace treaty they signed in October 1994. Jordanian and Israeli delegates who were charged with supervising the negotiations and conclusion of the entire set of accords called for in the treaty deserve high praise for their dilligent work.

It is clear that both sides showed high seriousness in their work on the agreements and were not just going through the paces to sign the accords, some of which took more time than actually envisioned in the peace treaty. That the two sides were very businesslike, and did not allow the delays to mar their relations and played down the difficulties in working out some of the key elements of cooperation was a clear indication that they realised the complexities involved and that no one should be rushed into agreements for the sake for agreements. The goodwill that was created by the peace treaty was there, but it was clear that both sides knew where to stand firm and where to relent whenever strong national interests were concerned.

A case in point is the protracted negotiations on the agreements on trade and transport where Jordan insisted on firm arrangements to protect its own interests, and Israel, despite its own concerns, went largely along the Kingdom's arguments in many cases. And Jordan reciprocated over some points on which Israel stood firm and insisted on some provisions that defended its own interests. That is the very concept of negotiating and giving and taking.

The agreement that was signed last week in Tiberias on sea, land and air transport arrangements between the two countries is key to implementing several other accords entered by them. Some of its provisions tend to create a slow pace of the actual movements of goods between the two sides, but then one has to realise that Jordanians and Israelis have yet to reach a point where interaction between them is separate from the overall political features of the Middle East conflict at its base.

However, there is little doubt that the successful conclusion of the series of agreements as stipulated in the peace treaty highlighted the fact that Jordan and Israel are showing the way to the world how not only to reach peace agreements but also to implement them and live up to the expectations of warm peace between two parties whose common interests by far exceed diversities against the backdrop of the requirements of the new world order.

It will be no exaggeration to affirm that the way Jordan and Israel are going about in cementing their relationship as two good neighbours seeking to live in harmony after nearly half a century of hostilities is an example for most other countries in the region which would sooner or later reach their own peace agreements and bilateral accords with the Jewish state.

We have little to doubt the Israeli seriousness and interest to develop close economic relations with Jordan as reaffirmed by Prime Minister Shimon Peres and other Israeli leaders in recent comments. Those remarks clearly indicate that Israel, whose economy is 20 times larger than that of Jordan, is fully aware of the need to narrow the economic disparity wherever possible. It is not going to be easy, given the fast-moving race for economic development through attracting foreign capital and swift changes in internal policies throughout the world. And both sides realise and accept the reality.

At the same time, the way Jordan has moved ahead in adopting economic reform over the past six years and in placing itself on the fast track to recovery after the chaos that hits its currency and monetary position in 1988 clearly shows that the Kingdom is living up to the challenges and requirements of the new international economic order. This track record is held in high respect by the international community as evidenced by the comments and positive behaviour of world experts who attended the Amman economic summit three months ago.

Our leadership has clearly shown that close Jordanian-Israeli economic cooperation is both a strategic and political objective that would complement all efforts to ensure that the people would enjoy the fruits of peace. No doubt it is a process that would take some time, as all economic plans do, but the major initial steps have already been undertaken. Now it is up to us Jordanians to live up to the challenges of business and commerce. Those who prefer to sit down and wait for someone to offer the fruits of peace in a silver platter would definitely be left behind. Hesitation and brinksmanship could be too costly.

Writers voice support for Palestinian polls

Reviewed by Elia Nasralah

THE JORDANIAN Arabic dailies discussed the approaching Palestinian elections, the developments in the peace process, with emphasis on the Syrian Israeli negotiations, pan Arab affairs and domestic issues.

A writer in Al Ra'i criticised Hamas' last minute decision on the eve of the Palestinian elections which called for a boycott of the elections, Hamas had earlier announced that though it will not participate in the elections, it will not discourage people from voting, noted Sultan Al Hattab. Should the Palestinian heed Hamas' call, they would be playing in to the hands of the Israeli extremists who are also opposed to the elections and to giving the Palestinians their freedom, said the writer. Israeli extremist groups have openly voiced their objection to the elections and have been hoping to disrupt them through acts of violence which could still occur at any moment, said the writer. He said the Palestinian people are called on to heed the call of national unity and vote in the first ever Palestinian elections to achieve their aspirations.

Criticising those who have launched campaigns against the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the coming elections, Mohammad Kawash, a writer in Al Dustour, said that the PNA is closely watched by international observers and can only play its cards well, ensuring fair and free elections. The opponents of peace are trying to find fault with the PNA in every way and at every occasion but are themselves not contributing towards the settlement of the Palestine issued said Mr. Kawash. The writer said that one must not forget that the PNA has been struggling to construct Palestinian Institutions from scratch which requires that the authority be given the chance to proceed with its work aimed at creating a Palestinian state and is in need of national unity at this crucial stage.

Tayseer Tamimi, a writer in Al Ra'i, said that observers of the Palestinian election campaign must have noticed that the candidates have been issuing statements marked with political objectivity.

The writer said that the candidates have been directing their attention to women's rights, economic reform and the creation of a democratic Palestinian state. In their statements, campaign posters and on pamphlets these candidates have chosen their promotions wisely. The writer stressed that only by being logical and closely interacting with the people's feelings can the candidates succeed in winning the people's favour.

Ahmad Al Misleh, a writer in Al Ra'i, hailed the Palestinian elections as a great event in the life of long oppressed people. The writer said that the success of the elections will no doubt have a positive effect on the peace process. It will also convince the opponents of peace that the time has come to change their stand and give peace a chance to help Palestinians establish an independent state. The PNA is keen to prove to the world that it aims at fair and free elections as these are the elements that support democracy.

Hamadeh Faraaneh, a writer in Al Dustour, criticised the Islamic Action Front (IAF) after it blamed the PNA for being partially responsible for the assassination of Hamas leader Yahya Ayyash. Why does the IAF level accusations at the PNA when every Palestinian is certain that Ayyash's killing was at the hands of the Israelis and their agents, asked the writer. There is no justification for the IAF's stand towards the PNA and its drive to secure the liberation of Palestinian lands, especially at a time when national unity in Palestine and backing for the Palestinians from the Arab countries are urgently needed, said the writer.

This view, is countered by Yaser Zaatreh, a writer in Al Dustour, who said that investigations have shown that certain elements within the PNA helped the Israelis to kill Ayyash. The writer said depsite the revelations of these investigations, the PNA took no step to punish those who allegedly colluded with Israeli assassins. He asked how the PNA could demand that Hamas stop the armed struggle when the Israelis continue to resort to acts of terrorism? The hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who attended the funeral of Ayyash, said the writer, constituted a clear vote in opposition to the Oslo deals and in favour of continuing the struggle against Israel by all possible means.

Nawaf Zaru, a writer in Al Dustour, said that Israel has sent a clear message to Syria through its foreign minister Ehud Barak, who issued a warning that Israel can by no means give any concessions to Damascus over water rights. Despite the on-going Israeli-Syrian negotiations, Mr. Barak chose to affirm that the Syrians' demands in water resources are by no means acceptable, thus stemming any further talks over the future of peace, said the writer. These and other statements by Israeli officials clearly demonstrate the gap separating the two sides which have yet to achieve progress on the questions of security and Israeli withdrawals, added the writer. One can expect a similar Israeli stand towards Lebanon where Israel is also exploiting that country's water resources.

A writer in Al Ra'i expressed the view that wars in the coming century will be over water rights, especially in the Middle East. Munes Razzaz said that people of this region, many of whom are still struggling for freedom, democracy and respect of human rights will soon find themselves struggling for water, which will become scarce in the next century. Noting that the conflict over water could be fiercest between Turkey on the one hand and Syria and Iraq on the other, the writer said that the present ruling regime in these countries will do well to act wisely and open talks immediately to find ways to settle the coming disputes through peaceful means.

A writer in Al Ra'i daily said that one way of ensuring a halt to Jordan's growing unemployment problem is to find means for exporting goods and services. By exporting services, Jordan will be sending qualified workers abroad to earn hard currency and by exporting good quality products, the same objective can be achieved, said Fahed Al Fanek. The national economy will in turn be strengthened, he said. Jordan began facing an unemployment problem in the late 1980s when expatriates returned home. At the same time the country started encountering difficulties in exporting its goods to the Gulf states and other parts of the world. The writer said that while two decades ago the Gulf countries absorbed 40 per cent of the Jordanian workforce, now far fewer are working abroad while the oumber of guest workers here either remained the same or increased.

The Week in Print

'Likud will not undo' self-rule

(Continued from page 1)

way they do a fairly good impersonation of myself") — as a strong reaffirmation of the Monarch's commitment to peace.

"My approach vis-a-vis the Palestinian issue would be to have a combination of autonomous zones and Israeli security zones, preferably involve Jordan in as many functions as it wishes to undertake in the functional areas... this is what I envisage."

Asked what was his definition of Israeli "territory," he said:

"I would not undo what has been done by this present government in the sense of acting militarily to uproot PLO domains. I would not do that. What I would do is to seek to contain this entity from expanding up to the 1967 borders, whether westwards, or eastwards for that matter to the Jordan Valley. I think this would be for the benefit of everyone.

"I think what it would create a realistic balance between Israel's need for security and the Palestinians' need for greater freedom. Also, I think this is also in the interest of Jordan because I don't think it is in our common interests to have a full-fledged, armed Palestinian state sandwiched between Israel and Jordan. This is not a prescription in the long-term for stability and peace."

In response to a question what was, in his view, the best arrangement with the Palestinians, he said:

"I prefer autonomy, although I am less concerned with what they do or do not do in Gaza because Gaza is, neither historically nor strategically, as significant to us as Judea and Samaria (the West Bank).

"We recognise (what have been made) on the ground in Judea and Samaria and we shall take them into account, but we will seek, as I said, a balance between our security needs, which, I believe, we can accommodate through arrangements in the rest of the territory, and the Palestinians in the rest of the territories will run themselves.

"Most Israelis want that balance. I would even say that the present government will promise to afford that balance in the coming elections.

"The Israeli public will have to decide who it believes is better capable or has real means to achieve such an agreement for such a balance, and I think they will entrust the job to us."

Mr. Netanyahu asserted that Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt under the 1978 Camp David agreements because the accords fulfilled "the two necessary conditions for the fulfilment of peace... a remarkable sincerity for peace on the part of Anwar Sadat," and the creation of a demilitarised Sinai as "a strategic depth to buttress the peace."

In the case of Jordan, Israel had no doubts about the sincerity of King Hussein and the Monarch's commitment to peace and this was reaffirmed by the King when he told Parliament, "just a few months ago, no more wars, no more anti-Jew laws, no more boycotts."

The Likud is also "fully satisfied by the security provisions of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty. The Israeli army is on the banks of the River Jordan, not for the prospects of today but for the future."

But the arrangements with Egypt or Jordan are not applicable to the Golan Heights, which Israel occupied in the 1967 war, he said.

"In the Golan Heights we do not have 200 kilometres of strategic depth. The whole Golan is only seven miles wide. If we forfeit the Heights, we have nothing. We will have a drastically deteriorated security situation which no plane in the sky and no satellite in space and no monitor substitute for.

"In fact, even if we believed the sincerity of President Hafez Al Assad for peace, even if we believe that — we are actually sceptical about it — Assad is Sadat or King Hussein, we would still be left with the question of where are the minimum security requirements if we are wrong, what if there is a change in regime in Damascus. In this case, there is only one satisfactory security arrangement, and that is a locking force of Israeli tanks on the Golan Heights, and Israeli soldiers on Mount Hermon."

The Likud leader asserted that Syria would be tempted to violate peace because it needs more water.

"Syria's population, since 1947, has doubled, from 6.5 million to 13 million. But Syria's water supply at the same time has shrunk because Turkey has dammed the principal water source for Syria, the Euphrates River. So Syria is under water pressure, very difficult water pressure. And when you give it a third of our water — our water comes from the Golan Heights — and the ability to militarily dominate us from the north, then you are creating the prescription not for peace but for future outbreak of hostilities. This is not a very good prescription for stability or reconciliation."

Asserting that Israel was better positioned to interact with the advanced technological community of the world, Mr. Netanyahu said he saw only Jordan and the Palestinians benefiting economically from Israel.

"The increase of wealth in Israel would spill over to investments across the border, especially the utilisation of natural minerals, phosphates, on a more rational basis in the Jordan Valley," he said. "Potentially the most lucrative toorism vacation spot for the European continent could be established in the Aqaba-Eilat basin. This would be a derivative of Israel's newfound wealth that Jordan could enjoy and I think the Palestinians could enjoy. But the rest of the Middle East may fall behind."

Ferry boat hijackers surrender

(Continued from page 1)

ded fresh water for the ship's engines and renewed a demand to sail into the strait — something the Turkish government has rejected as too dangerous.

"We are like dynamite. We are in the process of exploding. We will enter the Bosphorus," the hijacker declared.

Speaking in Moscow before the surrender was reported, Russian President Boris Yeltsin fumed at Turkey's handling of the affair.

The hijackers seized the ferry Tuesday in the Turkish port of Trabzon and threatened to blow it up in the Bosphorus Strait unless Russia halted a fierce attack on Chechen hostage-takers in a village in Dagestan.

Russia on Thursday ended a four-day assault on the Cehchen hostage-takers in Pervomaiskaya village.

Palestinians vote today

(Continued from page 1)

not shot and were left to bleed to death in their car.

Mr. Arafat, sure of victory, has not campaigned for Saturday's poll which he hopes will legitimise his peace accord with Israel, and eventually lead to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Dreams of independence, however, crashed in to the reality of Israel's ultimate dominance.

Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza for two days and Foreign Minister Ehud Barak said it would insist on keeping blocs of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip when talks on a final resolution of the conflict begin in May.

Fearing disruption by Jewish settlers both Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) have deployed thousands of police, particularly in the flashpoints of Jerusalem and Hebron. More than 600 international observers, including former U.S. Presideot Jimmy Carter, are monitoring voting (see page 2 and 12).

Palestinian police broke a demonstration on Friday one of the PLO factions boycotting the poll in Ramallah, north of Jerusalem.

"Let's make tomorrow Jerusalem Day," PLO official Faisal Al Husseini told voters in an open letter carried in Arabic papers on Friday.

He urged a big turnout in order to reinforce Palestinian claims to Arab sector of the Holy City.

"We are expecting some serious problems especially in Jerusalem and Hebron where we don't have the deployment of the Palestinian police and you know Hebron is where the settlers are," Mohammad Ishtaiyeh, secretary of the Central Elections Committee, told Reuters.

He said Israel had assured organisers voting would not be disrupted. "But this does not alleviate our fear, we know that the Israeli right wing are preparing for a demonstration," he said.

Bosnia deadline mostly met

(Continued from page 1)

of wood and rolls of bedding onto the truck, cleared out of a two-storey house on the Lopare-to-Tuzla road at around 3:00 p.m. (1400 GMT).

"This is the last position we had in this area," said Jovan Bogdanovic, the Sreb commander supervising the operation.

Watching the Serbs was a group of 40 U.S. soldiers of the NATO-led IFOR who said they had moved to the site Thursday.

Meanwhile, the chief prosecutor of the International War Crimes Tribunal said Friday he would be seeking to exhume bodies from mass graves in Bosnia in search of evidence that could help convict those responsible of war crimes.

"We regard it as important in relation to some crimes to exhume mass graves," Richard Goldstone said after talks on cooperation with IFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the arrest of war criminals.

Jordan, Israel sign accords

(Continued from page 1)

conclusion of the agreements as the beginning of the era of peacebuilding, saying peace between Jordan and Israel should serve as a model for other peace agreements and relationships between Israel and other parties to the peace talks.

"Today we are entering a new phase, from peacemaking to peacebuilding," said Mr. Barak at the ceremony, which marked the end of the mandate of the monitoring committee of the implementation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

"Leaders sign papers (and) the elite lay the groundwork, but it is basically and ultimately the people who really make and build peace," said Mr. Barak, a former chief of the Israeli army.

After the ceremony, which Prince Hassan described as a "practical demonstration" of what concluding a peace agreement means, the two delegations left the tented site of the ceremony for Eilat on boat to attend an official dinner hosted by Mr. Peres.

"This is a remarkable day for me, my country and the future," Prince Hassan said during a speech at the dinner.

"This day is of great importance for Jordan, for today witnesses the realisation of a long held vision with some very substantial, concrete and pragmatic realities," said the Crown Prince.

Prince Hassan said the agreements signed only represent the first step of peacemaking. "Peace, as we seek it, cannot be attained by signatures alone. It can only come about as the result of a slow process of growth and interaction," he said.

"It is our ambition to achieve in the Middle East the interdependence which now prevails in Europe and in the Benelux countries, based as it is on mutual respect," said the Prince. "In peacebuilding, every step we take renews our commitment to our common aspirations," said Prince Hassan, who toured some streets of Eilat before heading back home early Friday morning.

The Crown Prince stressed the need for bringing about a quick implementation of projects that can contribute to the improvement of the living standards of people.

"A future free from root causes of conflict can be achieved if we develop mechanisms that address questions of resource distribution and development both human and natural," said the Crown Prince.

"Once we tackle the disparities and distortions that are the destructive legacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict, then we can begin to build instead, a zone of shared prosperity.".

Mr. Peres welcomed Prince Hassan to Eilat as a leader who has won the love and respect of Israelis.

His Majesty King Hussein "won the hearts" of Israelis, Mr. Peres told Prince Hassan, who, he said, has also "conquered the hearts of the Israeli people."

Mr. Peres said the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel should serve to improve the living standards of the two peoples.

Peace and the visits of King Hussein and Prince Hassan to Israel was "a dream come true," Mr. Peres said in a speech welcoming Prince Hassan and the accompanying delegation, which included Sharif Zeid, officials who signed the agreements, Minister of Culture Samir Habashneh and other senior military officers and civil servants.

"Peace between Jordan and Israel serves as an example for peace" with the other parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, said Mr. Peres, who added in remarks to journalists that peace with Jordan is "great (and) warm."

Mr. Peres said that Israel wants to make the same kind of peace with the rest of the Arab countries.

"We really want to make peace with all," he said, before seeing off Prince Hassan and the accompanying delegation at the harbour for the seven-minute boat ride to Aqaba.

Prince Hassan: Dialogue is the vital prerequisite to all of our endeavours

'Today, normal life between Jordan and Israel can begin at last'

FOLLOWING IS the full text of the speech His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan gave at the dinner banquet which Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres held in his honour in Eilat Thursday

Mr. Prime Minister,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

THIS IS a remarkable day for me, my country, and the future. For my part, this is the first time that I have had the occasion to address a gathering in Israel, a significant responsibility. Thank you all so much for the sincere reception which you have given us. We are touched by the warmth of your welcome.

This day is of great importance for Jordan, for today witnesses the realisation of a long-held vision with some very substantial, concrete and pragmatic realities. In October, 1994, Jordan and Israel signed an historic treaty of peace, but the process of negotiation was not complete. The treaty stipulated that we reach agreement in a number of crucial areas that would together form the foundations of normal relationships between our two countries. Today, we concluded all of those agreements. Today, normal life between Jordan and Israel can begin at last.

The 50 years that have passed since the end of the World War II have seen a festering of conflicts which pitted nation against nation, peoples against peoples and child against child in all parts of the globe. As the year 2000 approaches, thank goodness, the realisation is slowly dawning that man's inhumanity against man cannot be ended by force, but must be ended by peace. A peace that encompasses the needs and aspirations of all peoples in a fair and just manner.

As Rabbi Shim'onbar Yochai said:

Gadol shalom, she-kol ha-b'rachot kelulot bo.

Great is peace — for all blessings are contained in it.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is ignorance, misunderstanding and fear which render men apart. These are the true enemies of peace and when such a situation goes on for too long, people are lulled into thinking that there is no other option. Many thought the Arab-Israeli conflict was one such case, and yet here I am today, in Eilat, addressing an Israeli audience only one week after His Majesty King Hussein visited Tel Aviv.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The agreements stipulated by the treaty — on the Maritime Boundary, Science and Technology, Aqaba-Eilat, and Telecommunications only represent the first step of peace making. Their symbolic and pragmatic importance should not be lost. Peace, as we seek it, cannot be attained by signature alone. It can only come about as the result of a slow process of growth and interaction. It is our ambition to achieve in the Middle East, the interdependence which now prevails in Europe, and in the Benelux countries, based as it is on mutual respect. In peace building, every step we take renews our commitment to our common aspirations.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our two countries share a common resource of rare value and unparalleled beauty. You, Prime Minister Peres, have spoken eloquently of transforming the Jordan Rift Valley into a showcase of intra-national development, and here I pay tribute to the support of President Clinton as well as his colleagues, the heads of governments of the Russian Federation, the EU and Japan, it was indeed a memorable day when His Majesty King Hussein and the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin received Chancellor Kohl to inaugurate jointly a programme of rational exploitation of the water resources of the Jordan Rift Valley. We in Jordan share your vision. Let us begin to make it happen. Let us make it our priority to implement those projects which bring immediate and real improvements to peoples' lives. Let us allow regional cooperation to lead us to the kind of peace that we seek, for our treaty commits us to work towards this end. A future free from root causes of conflict, can be achieved if we develop mechanisms that address questions of resource distribution and development, both human and natural. Once we tackle the disparities and distortions that are the destructive legacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict, then we can begin to build instead, a zone of shared prosperity, to give all of our peoples a real stake in a real future.

Having just returned from Brussels, I am glad to tell you that the conclusion of a partnership agreement between Jordan and the European Union is now very close. This should facilitate bilateral cooperation between Jordan and Israel, and eventual multilateral regional cooperation. In working towards these ends, and in seeking to achieve comprehensive security and sustainable development, it is vital that inclusion rather than exclusion be our guiding principle; and that communication rather than confrontation be our main lodestone, with participation open to all.

Dialogue is the vital prerequisite to all of our endeavours. One must therefore think of dialogue in its broadest sense. Interfaith and inter-cultural exchanges play a vital part in peace building, for faith and culture are central components of identity. Our objective is to illustrate the common ground between our faiths, and to establish the basic values that we share within the Abrahamic tradition. From these foundations, we aim to build a genuine and mutual understanding. To understand one another we have to know each other. We have to talk and we have to listen. Then and only then will we be able to truly live together. Dialogue is thus at the heart of coexistence, security and peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen

My grandfather, the late King Abdullah, the founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan said at the beginning of this century that people must decide between war or peace. To continue indifferently in an indecisive vacuum is just not acceptable.

King Abdullah — like all right-minded people abhorred war — so therefore the alternative must be peace, but the key to the just and lasting peace to which we all aspire is work, hard work and more work. But it is well-worth it. There is no alternative.

In 1924, David Ben Gurion wrote: "According to my moral judgement, we have no right whatsoever to deprive a single Arab child, even if through such deprivation we shall realise our aims." I believe that Israelis today are still imbued with the desire for social justice and common welfare that fired many of the first Jewish pioneers in Palestine. Some believe that Jews and Arabs could together achieve wonders. Arthur Ruppin, a leader among them, urged Jews to work with Arabs to build a new "civilised community" of free men, raising the level of human culture and achievement throughout the Middle East. Sadly, this was not to be, but now, it is our privilege to be given the chance for a new beginning. Let us be worthy of the responsibility. Let us be worthy of our peoples. It has been said in the Quran:

He it is who has made for you the stars, that you may follow the right direction in the darknesses of the land and sea. We have expounded the signs in detail for a people who possess knowledge (Al An'am, Chapter 6, Verse 97).

Princess Sarvath: We must ensure that gender disparity in education becomes a thing of the past

FOLLOWING IS the full text of the speech given by Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Thursday at the third general meeting of the United Nation's Women's Society in Amman

Ladies and gentlemen,

I AM delighted to be here with you today, and hope I can give you some idea as to the importance I attach to the role of the education of women in the development of a modern society.

Education is a basic human right, and we must ensure that gender disparity in education becomes a thing of the past sooner rather than later. It cannot continue to be accepted as a fact of life for so many. The problems, in this respect, and their solutions are neither novel nor easy, but sometimes it is no bad thing to restate the obvious. In fact, I have already addressed this issue a few years ago at a UNICEF conference in New York, the theme of which was "education for girls — a human right, a social gain." But much of what I said then remains valid today.

I would first like to define why it is vital to promote and encourage equal educational opportunities for girls. Although most of these points have often been said in the past, they merit a brief restatement for they lie at the very core of any discussion on the subject. In terms of resource allocation and deployment, mass education is clearly the most effective strategy for any developing country hoping to improve its quality of life.

Any such policy must include women, equally and impartially for not only is it their right, but women are, and always have been, the first educators. The grounding that they provide in the first years of a child's life must surely determine later priorities and perspectives. A woman who is herself educated, can more effectively educate her children and better guide them. Not only can she administer their lives more competently, but it is largely true that a woman who has had the benefit of even a minimum education usually has a smaller, healthier family; for she is better equipped to care for them and often also contributes a better standard of skilled mental and physical labour to the work force. She is therefore a vital resource in the development of her family, her community and her country. It makes good sense to invest in her education. These truths were admirably encapsulated by the now familiar words of Ruby Manikan: "If you educate a man you educate a person, but if you educate a woman you educate a family." And Jordan can provide many examples of the veracity of this statement.

As many of you probably know, we have experienced a silent revolution in the education of girls. In hard terms, this is manifest in our present primary school enrolment rate which today stands at 99 per cent for girls — with boys lagging slightly behind at 95 per cent. Girls' continuation through secondary schools has risen in just a generation from 8 per cent to 64 per cent and continuation rates at this level are again slightly higher for girls than for boys, regardless of the family's economic circumstances. At the tertiary levels, girls make up close to two thirds of those enrolled at community colleges, and over 50 per cent of university undergraduates. So even in the poorest urban households, Jordan has witnessed a dramatic transformation. A generation ago, many Jordanian mothers were illiterate; their daughters, the mothers of today, enjoy the boon of near universal literacy. And the benefit of this is seen in the rapid decline in infant and child mortality rates. It is a matter of great pride that Jordan, in 1988, achieved the goal of universal immunisation almost three years ahead of the 1990 target set by the WHO (World Health Organisation). Literacy, and the quest for learning, armed Jordan's mothers with the knowledge of the need to immunise their children against preventable diseases, and how to seek help when necessary. The mothers themselves are putting the premium on education, and this is why such a high percentage of girls, having gone through the compulsory cycle of education, continue into secondary school.

Much lip service is given to the importance of human resource development. Women represent 50 per cent of those resources and yet, it is estimated that two thirds of the world's adult illiterates and out of school children are female — a dismal statistic by any account. And a shameful waste. Many countries, have certainly made considerable progress over the past forty years in increasing access to education generally. However, the gender gap, and the disparity between the sexes in educational matters above all, is still just too high. Primary school enrolment in the Middle East and North Africa stands at almost 100 per cent for boys, now but is somewhere near the 85 per cent mark for girls — an unacceptable gap. The reasons for this discrepancy are many and varied, and not as obvious as they might seem. Economic circumstances are of course a major factor in determining the quality and quantity of educational opportunities that countries offer to their citizens. One does however, come across communities where despite dire financial limitations, the authorities struggle to educate their girls and keep them within the educational system, and despite all constraints vigourslY encourage the participation of women in public and economic life. Cultural heritage and attitudes, and the commitment of leaders to the universal education of girls are therefore crucial deciding factors in any attempt to ensure that girls are offered broad and equal educational opportunities, and to stimulate them to take advantage of those opportunities.

And here we can face another delimma, for there are societies where full educational opportunities are available for girls but then they are given little chance to use their education outside their homes. It certainly seems strange in all good conscience to encourage and assist a group of people to pursue an education and then deny them the chance of putting that same education to use for their own benefit, and that of their family, community, and nation.

So why do these prejudices exist, particularly in some Muslim and Arab countries? It certainly cannot have anything to do with Islam. True Islam has traditionally held the written word and the quest for knowledge in special sanctity. The Prophet Mohammad said: "Searching for knowledge is the duty of every believer, male and female," and enjoined Muslims to "educate your children, for they are born for a time that is not yours" and in that context specifically used the Arabic word "anladaakum" which refers to children of both sexes and not "abnaakum", which would imply boys alone.

At its apex, Islamic civilisation knew a remarkable degree of cultural homogeneity, broad-based tolerance and a profound respect for learning. In contrast, the countries of the region are today notable for their heterogeneity. They differ in their populations and ethnic makeup, their colonial pasts, their natural resources and geographical features, and, not least, in their levels of material affluence. In addition, and of greatest relevance to our discussions today, is the radically different ways in which their governments and the powers that be view and promote their educational policies, and most particularly where they pertain to women.

Obviously, then, the most important factor in changing the status quo must be a political will for change. It can now be seen that the bedrock of Jordan's educational revolution was legislation passed as long ago as 1952, in the reign of His late Majesty King Talal, making nine years of education compulsory for both sexes. It was also provided free of charge to all children and, in a society that traditionally tended to favour sons over daughters, this was a significant move in encouraging the education of Jordanian girls.

Other government initiatives were subsequently taken to encourage equal educational and job opportunities. Both men and women were encouraged to enter the teaching profession, and female teachers in the primary level now outnumber males. Private schooling was also encouraged so as to reduce the burden on government facilities and, as an illustration of the flexibility that is required in pursuing objectives of this nature, both the government and private sector run single sex as well as coeducational schools, colleges and universities. The government, one of the largest employers in Jordan, uses salary scales which do not differentiate between male and female employees. Attempts have also been made to improve the employment conditions of working mothers, and although still far from perfect, legislation has been passed accordingly.

Yet governments alone may lack the expertise and resources to realise ambitious and wide-ranging objectives. Cooperation with local and international NGOs, and international organisations was instrumental in realising the Jordanian ambition of equal opportunities in education and beyond. A number of schools were founded by NGOs which in many cases offer the only locally accessible educational facilities. NGOs and other organisations also cooperated with the government in a highly successful campaign to promote awareness of the value of education. This campaign was a critical turning point in the expansion of Jordan's school enrolment rates.

International organisations such as UNICEF also made much needed contributions, the most notably commendable of which are its joint efforts with the government and national NGOs, such as the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, to spread health messages throughout the country and so improve the quality of life for Jordanian men, women and children. UNESCO was instrumental in providing teacher training through the scholarship programmes it funded at the request of the government to cover the cost of university education for Jordanian high school graduates. This programme was linked to service in the government schools, with the consequence that the number and quality of teachers in many vital fields was increased and improved.

Other joint NGO efforts have also been successful in promoting education for girls and women. The Young Muslim Women's Association, over which I preside, was helped by the German Overseas Aid Programme (GTZ), in establishing the Princess Sarvath Community College which seeks to equip young women from all over the Kingdom with the professional skills they need to earn a living. The College has also cooperated with a Canadian counterpart in setting up a project in Early Childhood Education that emphasises all aspects of early childhood care, including a training programme for kindergarten teachers. Expanding on the success of these programmes, another joint project is underway, focusing on all aspects of learning difficulties. Although this project is not exclusively aimed at women, it has been launched on a national scale to train teachers and help educators and families to identify and deal with the problems. Working closely with the Ministries of Education and Planning, we hope to make the college a regional centre of excellence.

Although my country still has a long way to go, the value of the Jordanian experience lies in its acknowledgement of the complementary and inseparable goals of education for all, and of the need to further expand equal opportunities for full participation in society. Behind this, however, must lie recognition of the fact that our goals revolve around basic issues of civil and human rights, and social change. To arrive at our objectives, we may have to address the "process" itself, and to subject to rigorous examination our assumptions about the nature and purpose of education. This involves an honest and firm commitment, in traditionally male-oriented societies, to heightened female participation. More pragmatically, it requires a high degree of cultural sensitivity as it involves an appreciation of the possible consequences of encouraging such a transition, and the obstacles likely to be encountered in a given regional context.

In more specific terms, governments that wish to encourage and improve female education have a wealth of information and assistance available to them. There are international organisations which can contribute vitally to planning as well as implementation, and governments should not hesitate to seek out and encourage such input. U.N. agencies, in turn, can also help to relieve over-burdened governments, by building bridges with local NGOs. These agencies and international NGOs can draw on their experiences in different settings worldwide. In the best case scenarios, they will have established ties with local NGOs and national institutions which in their turn have the ability to reach people in remote rural areas, and to understand the needs and demands of their respective societies, and can thus bring to the process their particular expertise. Every little bit counts, and makes a difference.

However, complementary measures of this nature require clearly defined mandates for all the institutions involved, so as to avoid duplication, and forestall the possibility of disputes.

The U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognise the principle of gender equality, which presupposes equality of education, and I am on a personal note very proud that my parents contributed towards both these two documents. Education is a human right. I would like to stress again, in conclusion, that it is also a social gain. The advantages to society of an educated and aware female population are immeasurable, for women are the very heart of society. And Sir Walter Scott once wrote that the education of the heart is the first step to the realisation of destiny. If we accepted that as true, it must then follow that education is fundamental to development. The responsibility lies with each of us, and especially those fortunate enough to have had the chance to develop our potential and, fulfill our aspirations. We must encourage the development of this most vital human resource and to stimulate those involved to ever-greater achievement, undaunted by the constraints that face them.

The year 2000, the turn of the century, was targeted by the Regional Office of Education in the Arab States as the year by which, in an ideal world, all the countries of the region would have eradicated illiteracy or at least taken tangible steps towards that end. Unfortunately, the tragic events of the last few years show us all too vividly that our world is still far from ideal. But I am sure that when peoples of good faith stop to think, they will again unite in the pursuit of this vital and undeniable goal, which is the crux of any just and honourable society.

Jordan sees deals in '96 with U.S. oil companies

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan expects to sign deals with U.S. firms early next year on oil and gas concessions and joint ventures covering nearly half the country, the energy minister said Tuesday.

"We have a number of major U.S. oil companies [illegible] interest in signing production sharing agreements in oil and gas and joint venture projects and we hope to finalise accords in early 1996," Samih Darwazah told Reuters.

Officials said U.S. companies are interested in exploring areas that cover between a third and half of Jordan's 90,000 square kilometres (35,000 square miles).

Jordan has found small quantities of natural gas but foreign firms had left in recent years after unsuccessful drilling costing millions of dollars.

The U.S. firm Transglobal signed a letter of intent to drill for oil in the Dead Sea area, Mr. Darwazah said. "If they withdraw there is another American firm interested in the same field along the Dead Sea."

Another U.S. company Amoco, which was negotiating for a concession in a large area in the northeast, he said. The company had pledged to invest $20 million in oil exploration.

U.S. firms Enron and AMOCO were both in talks with the new National Petroleum Company (NPC) to boost production from the northeastern Risha natural gas field near Iraq, he said.

The 7,000 square kilometres (2,700 square miles) Risha concession of NPC produces 30 million cubic feet of natural gas per day.

Mr. Darwazah said AMOCO would submit by the end of January a marketing study and evaluation of the Risha field, including reserves. A joint venture to raise production could be reached by mid-February.

AMOCO will decide the feasibility of constructing, owning and operating downstream gas facilities in Jordan by the end of 1996, Mr. Darwazah said.

Mr. Darwazah said Enron this week will also present proposals for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage and regassification facility on the Red Sea to transport Qatari gas through Jordan to Israel and Mediterranean markets.

Qatar gave Enron approval to market five million tonnes of LNG annually. Enron has been considering Israel, Jordan and Egypt as a site to receive Qatari gas.

Mr. Darwazah said Enron was becoming "very deeply" involved in Jordan and would submit a plan for a national network to supply gas to power stations and meet industrial and domestic needs.

'Asian Dragons' to remain economic powerhouse — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — The six "Asian Dragons" will continue to act as major engines of world trade and economic growth over the next two years, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicated Tuesday.

But the Dynamic Asian Economies (DAEs) — Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand — will be growing at a somewhat more moderate combined average rate of 6.0 to 7.0 per cent, it said.

For they will be grappling with the consequences of two years of above-trend growth, the firming up of their currencies against the yen in the past few months, and lower growth in China.

And inflation pressures and rising current account deficits will remain "key policy concerns for 1996" in several countries of the region, especially South Korea, Malaysia and Thailand, the OECD said in its year-end Economic Outlook.

The survey said the continued strong economic activity in the DAEs is led by brisk exports, growing domestic demand and rising foreign investment, especially from Japan.

But rapid expansion in 1994-95 — at average rates of 7.6 per cent in 1994 and an estimated 7.8 per cent this year — has caused problems of infrastructure bottlenecks and labour shortages, increasing cost pressures and boosting capital goods imports.

There were signs of a slowing down of activity in the second half of 1995 due to a tightening of monetary policy — except in Taiwan — and because net exports were tempered as DAE currencies firmed up against the yen.

GDP growth peaked in South Korea at an annual rate of 10 per cent in the first half of 1995, boosted by brisk exports and domestic investment running at a rate of 20 per cent, particularly in plant and machinery.

The economy expanded at a more moderate pace in the second half, but South Korea will nevertheless record a 9.0 per cent jump in its GDP for the year as a whole, followed by a decline to a range of 7.5 to 7.0 per cent in 1996-97, according to OECD projections.

The OECD saw a similar slowdown in Thailand, and, more recently, Malaysia.

It noted that Hong Kong and Taiwan have been hit by a weakening of growth in China this year and the adverse impact of falling domestic property and asset prices.

In Taiwan and South Korea, with jobless rates at record lows of about 2.0 per cent, wages have been rising faster than productivity, putting upward pressure on costs, it said.

The appreciation of the yen during the first half of 1995 also gave a boost to inflationary pressures in the region. But firmer DAE currencies since last August should dampen these pressures by cutting import costs and demand.

The OECD said current policies in the region should help contain inflation at an average of 5.0 to 6.0 per cent in 1996-97, although there were "upward risks" for such countries as South Korea, likely to face continuing wage pressures.

The OECD acknowledged that large capital inflows have made it harder, especially in faster-growing economies, to maintain a tight anti-inflation monetary policy stance.

It cited special measures taken in some countries to overcome this problem, including Thai moves to raise bank reserve requirements on foreign borrowing and to encourage private saving, and Malaysian measures to slow consumption and property purchases.

Both South Korea and Thailand, it noted, are planning budget surpluses for 1996.

The OECD said Taiwan, as the only exception, has eased its monetary stance to offset the impact of a fall in asset prices.

The DAEs as a group faced a $10 billion turnround in their current account balance this year, from a 1994 surplus of $3.3 billion to a 1995 deficit of $7.4 billion, despite some improvement in their terms of trade and slower growth in the second half.

The OECD said the deficit was likely to remain at the same level in 1996 because of continued high levels of infrastructure investment and resulting hefty capital goods imports, but could ease to somewhat below the $6 billion mark in 1997.

OECD sees deficit-cutting priority as economy picks up

PARIS (AFP) — OECD economic growth slowed somewhat this year, with Japan's recovery delayed by the strong yen, but should pick up in 1996 provided inflation and interest rates remain low, the OECD said Tuesday.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its half-yearly Economic Outlook said a more favourable year-end situation — partly due to the reversal of the dollar's plunge against the yen — should improve business and consumer confidence.

This could lift expansion of OECD output from this year's poor 2.4 per cent — a half-point down on 1994 — to average rates of 2.6 per cent in 1996 and 2.8 per cent in 1997, according to OECD projections completed just ahead of France's year-end labour crisis.

The report saw OECD-area growth "unlikely to be robust enough to make more than small further inroads" into unemployment, which could still affect some 33.5 million workers in OECD countries by end-1997.

Jobless rates could edge up in the United States and Japan — from 5.6 per cent this year to 5.9 per cent in 1997 in the former and from 3.1 per cent to 3.4 per cent in Japan both in 1996 and 1997 — but should decline by 0.5 point to 10.3 in Europe.

The strikes in France, over social security reform and other steps to cut public deficits, might entail some weakening of French and overall OECD growth outcomes for 1996, OECD delegation sources said.

Coincidentally, the key message of the OECD report was that governments must use the upswing to speed up reduction of budget deficits even if this required "politically difficult decisions" and significant adjustment of economic structures.

It said this was essential to head off the risk of growing public debt which could get out of hand over the medium term if real interest rates moved higher.

The OECD said progress in reducing deficits in several countries helped this year's decline in real interest rates and the easing of foreign exchange market pressures after the first-half turbulence.

But stronger macroeconomic policies and structural reforms were now needed both to improve medium-term growth and job prospects and to keep inflation low.

The OECD therefore welcomed the United States consensus to balance the U.S. federal budget over a period of years, noting that despite progress further U.S. deficit-cutting was required over coming years.

OECD economists said the U.S. economy, running close to capacity with unusually low inflation, should grow faster than expected at 3.5 per cent this year, easing to 2.7 per cent next year and 2.8 per cent in 1997.

As for Japan, now on course for a domestic demand-led recovery in 1996, they said authorities would have to "move quickly to restore a sound fiscal position" as soon as the upswing has been consolidated.

The OECD urged "a continuation of the orderly reversal of the yen" from its early 1995 highs, because this would "mitigate deflationary pressures" and help secure a quicker recovery.

It also warned that any renewed weakening of the dollar against the yen and the the Deustchemark could "adversely affect prospects in Japan, Germany and other countries participating in the (European) exchange rate mechanism (ERM)."

Helped by last September's stimulus package, Japan's GDP is set to rise 2.0 per cent from this year's flat 0.3 per cent, with growth gaining momentum at some 2.7 per cent in 1997.

The OECD strongly urged Japan to solve its financial sector crisis "as quickly as possible," warning that any worsening could affect the economy and have a major impact abroad.

The report projected fair growth in Europe at rates of 2.6 and 2.7 per cent over the next two years, but said this assumed improved consumer and business confidence and stable or even slightly lower interest rates.

Pressing the case for accelerated deficit-cutting, it said tht if GDP growth was 0.5 point weaker in both 1996 and 1997, budget deficits could rise by some 0.5 per cent of GDP across most of Europe.

The OECD also cited the need for early "crucial decision" on the transition to a single currency in the European Union "if uncertainty in financial markets is to be reduced and turbulence minimised."

And it ascribed deficits not only to population ageing but also to working-age transfers, which, in the context of high joblessness "may be making things worse."

The best news came from the non-OECD world: Recovery is gaining strength in most of central and east Europe, with Russia appearing poised for positive growth from next year, and China and Asia's dynamic "dragons" will remain the locomotives of world trade growth, continuing at rates of more than 8.0 per cent.

Juppe looks to economy, Chirac under fire

PARIS (R) — As France's worst labour unrest in a decade fizzled out Tuesday, Prime Minister Alain Juppe turned his attention to reviving a flagging economy.

Mr. Juppe has promised to offer measures to revive growth at a meeting with trade unions and employers on Thursday, but analysts say he has little room to give consumer spending a Christmas boost.

Thursday's "labour summit" is due to discuss youth unemployment and working hours after three weeks of crippling public sector strikes.

Critics on both sides of politics urged President Jacques Chirac to break a long silence about the crisis triggered by Mr. Juppe's plans to overhaul the indebted welfare system.

Former president Valery Giscard d'Estaing, in office in 1974-81, said Mr. Chirac needed to "give the country back a sense of direction" to overcome France's crisis of confidence.

"It cannot just be a single European currency and the Maastricht treaty criteria," the centre-right ex-president said. Those criteria limit currency fluctuation, public debt and deficits and inflation to qualify for monetary union in 1999.

Former Socialist education and culture minister Jack Lang said it was up to Mr. Chirac to pull the country out of crisis by "explaining to French people which direction we are heading in."

Rail services continued to pick up as the strikes wound down, although some die-hard strikers continued their action against Mr. Juppe's plans to overhaul the welfare state.

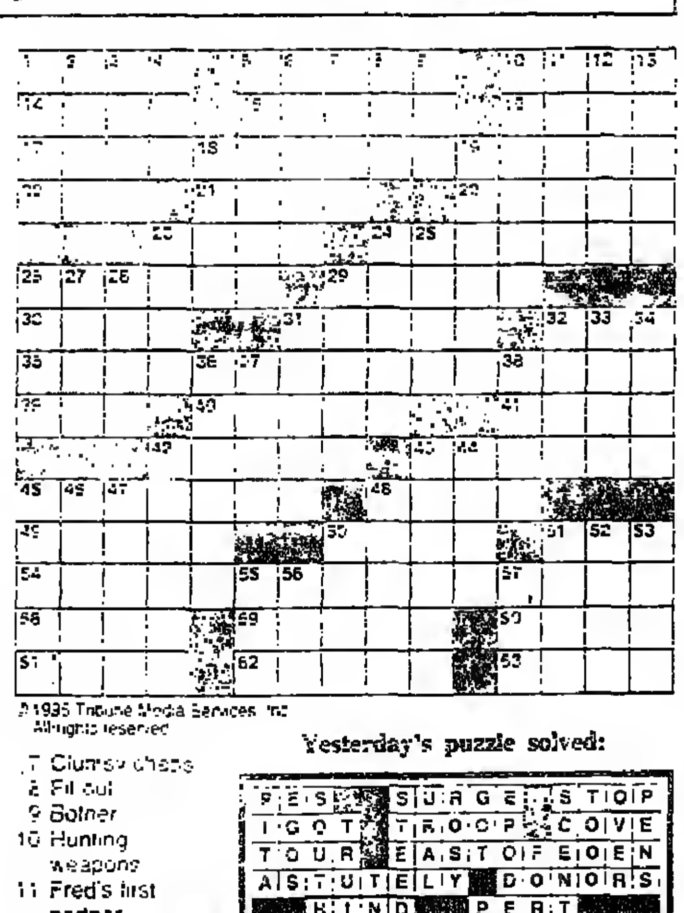
The Paris metro underground railway was working normally except for one line while SNCF state railways said roughly one train in two was running nationwide. But Paris buses were only operating at about 30 per cent with pickets blocking some depots.

The communist-led CGT union called new protest marches on Tuesday against Mr. Juppe's welfare reforms, keeping up pressure ahead of Thursday's negotiations.

But in Bordeaux, where the conservative prime minister is mayor, the number of marchers was sharply down at fewer than 10,000, compared to between 20,000 and 50,000 last Saturday. The city's striking garbage workers voted to resume work.

Mr. Juppe urgently needs to revive growth, hit by a slowdown exacerbated by the strikes (see page 12).

THE Daily Crossword by Betty Jorgensen



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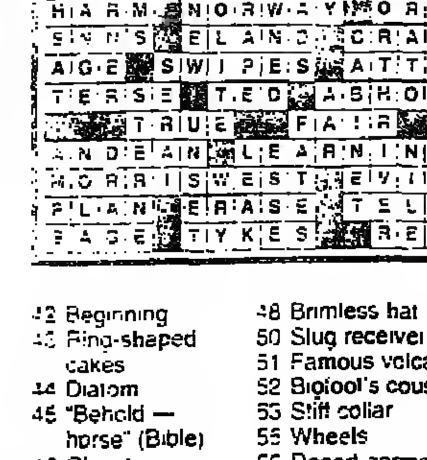
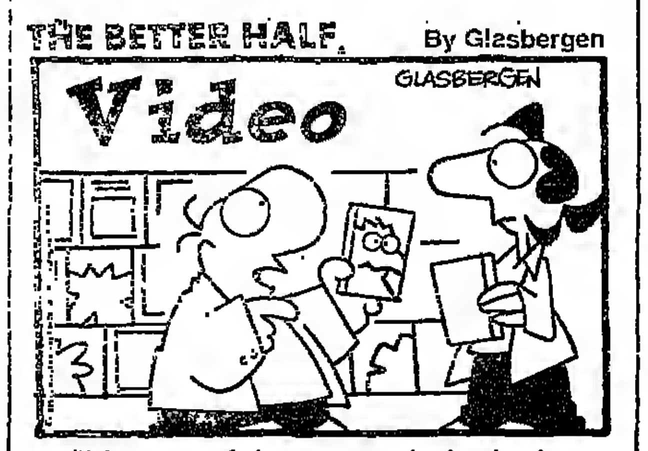
ACROSS
1 Art [illegible]
5 Brief political [illegible]
10 [illegible]
14 [illegible]
15 Coiled
16 [illegible] material
17 Conception: [illegible]
20 Foursome
21 River in England
22 [illegible]
23 Monarch in 43A
24 Part of a three-piece suit
26 [illegible]
29 Electric current measure
30 Astonishes
31 Cunning look
32 Windy City terminal
35 "— the very model ..."
35 Foursome
39 Mosquito carrier
40 Conclude from evidence
41 [illegible]
42 [illegible] mammal
43 TV soap
45 One who cites as evidence
48 Enamelware
49 Australian port
50 "— Sung Blue"
51 Peacock marking
54 Foursome
55 Olympics sled
56 Concerning
60 Involved with
61 Formerly, once
62 Count's
63 Principal

DOWN
1 [illegible] nail
2 [illegible] anger
3 Concerning
4 Sell
5 Place side by side
6 Express smug satisfaction
7 Clumsy chaps
8 Fill out
9 Bother
10 Hunting weapons
11 Fred's first partner
12 Canary's cousin
13 Waters down
18 Addict
19 Loewe's collaborator
23 Action word
24 Ringo or Bart
25 Restrain
26 Author Paton
27 Dole out
28 Bog maker
29 Farmer
31 Big
32 Pedestal percher
33 City on the Jumna
34 Shea team
36 Chinese nut
37 Being: Sp.
38 Man, for one
42 Beginning
43 Ring-shaped cakes
44 Diatom
45 "Behold — horse" (Bible)
46 Object
47 Narcotics
48 Brimless hat
50 Slug receiver
51 Famous volcano
52 Bigfoot's cousin
53 Stiff collar
55 Wheels
56 Desert garment
57 Lip

Yesterday's puzzle solved:



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"It's one of those psychological thrillers—Godzilla Vs. Himself!"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HUBSY

POCUE

YOANNE

NURTHE

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: TEMPO TWILL CEMENT POSTAL
Answer: The storm did this to the picnickers — WET THEIR APPETITES

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is an ideal day today to keep promises exactly and conscientiously. Tonight study into new interests which fascinate you.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Come to a meeting of minds with a dynamic partner during the daytime today, and then do the tasks expected of you in the evening.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Use your fine talent to meet any emergencies which may arise. Cooperate with a fellow associate and the future will be easier.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You need more amusement so arrange it for the days and weeks ahead, and then get into the tasks ahead of you which must be completed.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be more tactful at home in stating policies you wish followed in the morning today, then plan the best way to use your finest talents.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get right into your desk activities in the morning today, and get it cleared up most efficiently. Entertain guests in your home this evening.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get your practical affairs today more as you want them to be far into the evening then do outside tasks well for you to be successful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you go after your goals in a positive manner today, you can gain them with relative ease. Be more practical in your efforts.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Plan just how to attain your personal goals today over the weekend and make preparations at this time to get those ideas in operation.

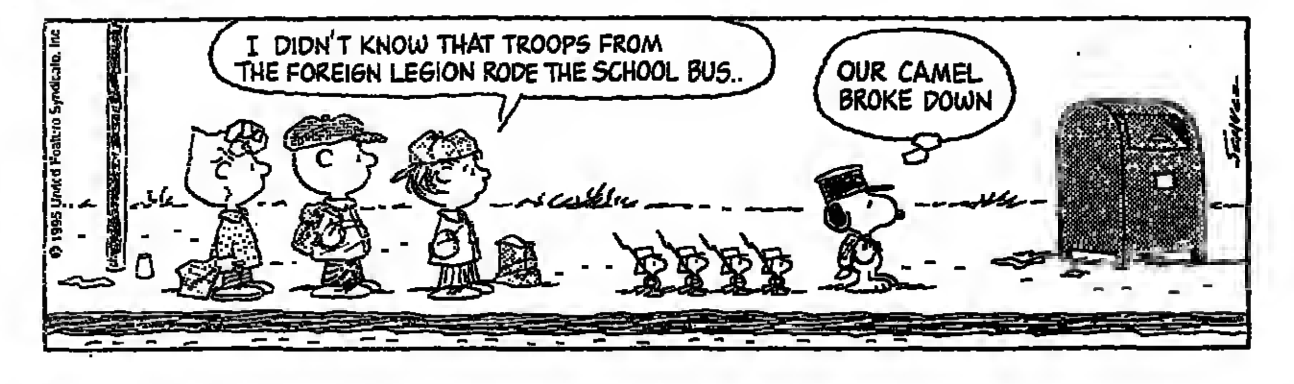
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Pursue that individual you want to know better and you soon can become friends. Get your business aims well clarified in what you desire.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get into public tasks with enthusiasm today and accomplish a good deal before you concentrate on intimate matters which must be completed.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get into that new interest which intrigues you today and work at it vigorously. The evening is fine for going about idly about town.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

Peanuts



Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

هكذا عند الأصل

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3634/44	Canadian dollar
	1.4806/16	Deutschemarks
	1.6554/64	Dutch guilders
	1.1924/34	Swiss francs
	30.37/41	Belgian francs
	5.0485/35	French francs
	1584.9/6.4	Italian lire
	105.37/47	Japanese yeo
	6.7120/20	Swedish crowns
	6.4710/60	Norwegian crowns
	5.7136/23	Danish crowns
	1.4210/20	Singapore dollars
	0.7365/70	Australian dollars
	7.7310/15	Hong Kong dollars
One sterling	$1.5088/98	
One ounce of gold	$398.90/399.40	

Trading, prices slip further at AFM

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Share prices and trading at the Jordanian stock exchange slipped last week as many held their positions awaiting a boost in prices amid expectations of foreign capital entering the market and only those seeking urgent liquidity accepting lower prices, brokers said Friday.

The sluggishness of the market was only temporary, many observers said, pointing out tbat the market expected a sizeable inflow of fresh funds soon.

According to the head of the Investment Promotion Corporation, Taleb Rifai, the market would see new investment capital of up to $250 million during 1996.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), said turnover during the week ending Thursday was JD 3.3 million under 3,873 contracts involving 1.8 million shares. Turnover for the previous week was JD 3.8 million.

Shares of 89 companies were traded during the week, with six of them closing with gains, 73 slipping and 10 remaining stable.

The official AFM index based on 60 major companies closed for the week at 152.5 points, down 1.8 poiots or 1.2 per cent, from the week's opening of 154.3 points.

Separate sector indices showed that services sector shares slipped by two per cent, industrials by 1.2 per cent, banks and financial institutions by one per cent and insurance stocks by 0.7 per cent.

Industrials accounted for JD 1.78 million or 53.3 per cent of the weekly volume, followed by banks and financial institutions with JD 790,000 or 23.7 per cent, services firms JD 720,000 or 21.5 per cent, and insurance companies with JD 50,000 or 1.5 per cent.

Brokers said several Arab and foreign investment firms had started coming into the market since the beginning of the year, but many local investors were holding out for higher prices and hence the low turnover.

"Only those who stood in need of urgent liquidity accepted buying offers and this largely accounted for the slip in prices," said an AFM dealer.

"It is not as if the new investors are coming in and immediately starting to buy left and right," said the dealer. "They are cautious, as all investors are, and are looking for promising opportunities based on sound judgement."

Another factor behind the slip in prices was the perennial trend in the market in the beginning of the year to switch holdings, said the dealer, adding:

"The market is quite healthy and all indications are that it would continue to improve this year as opposed to the relative stagnation and uncertainty that we saw last year."

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANISED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (13/01/1996 - 17/01/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	318,840	232.500	232.500	231.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	27,458	4.420	4.420	4.350
CAIRO AMMAN BANK	44,575	4.500	4.500	4.500
BANK OF JORDAN	9,167	3.700	3.700	3.630
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK.	4,472	1.210	1.210	1.220
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	15,975	2.520	2.520	2.520
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK/NEW	5,677	2.380	2.380	2.390
THE HOUSING BANK	20,866	4.870	4.870	4.730
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	5,883	2.800	2.800	2.730
JORDAN GULF BANK	114,355	1.080	1.080	1.040
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	5,788	3.900	3.900	3.850
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	81,900	3.660	3.660	3.610
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	42,253	3.580	3.580	3.510
BEIT ELMAL SAVING&INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	2,654	3.150	3.150	3.100
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	49,524	0.890	0.890	0.850
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	3,153	5.560	5.560	5.230
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK.	33,024	1.370	1.370	4.370
BANKS SECTOR	785562	INDEX NUMBER: 183.64		
	CHANGE	: -1.01%		
JORDAN INSURANCE	22,720	3.250	3.250	3.200
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	962	2.780	2.780	2.740
JORDAN GULF INSURANCE	23,894	2.800	2.800	2.700
INSURANCE SECTOR	47676	INDEX NUMBER: 129.26		
	CHANGE	: -0.73%		
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	239,609	1.730	1.730	1.670
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	12,194	9.000	9.000	9.000
IRBID DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	1,739	1.280	1.280	1.260
JORDAN HIMEH MINERAL	430	2.280	2.280	2.300
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	13,528	5.600	5.600	5.600
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	30,729	2.620	2.620	2.570
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	21,475	1.780	1.780	1.680
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	6,798	1.000	1.000	0.970
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	5,480	1.150	1.150	1.080
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRA'I	33,597	10.300	10.300	10.300
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	11,765	2.160	2.160	2.130
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	37,672	3.530	3.530	3.420
ZARKA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	16,972	1.240	1.240	1.210
UNIFIED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	93,374	2.290	2.290	2.210
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	33,238	1.020	1.020	0.990
SERVICES SECTOR	538597	INDEX NUMBER: 126.16		
	CHANGE	: -2.01%		
AFFABOKEP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	2,700	1.200	1.200	1.200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	374,178	3.480	3.600	3.600
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	12,812	2.220	3.220	2.240
THE ARAB POTASH	5,350	5.300	5.280	5.350
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	135,901	10.130	10.130	5.820
JORDAN TANNING	2,272	7.150	7.150	7.100
WOOLEN INDUSTRIES	140	1.400	1.400	1.400
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	20,377	3.710	2.710	3.650
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	36,558	7.700	7.700	7.590
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	88,453	4.420	4.420	4.520
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	793	6.150	6.150	6.100
JORDAN DAIRY	250	2.550	2.550	2.500
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	2,918	2.260	2.260	2.330
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	24,010	2.200	2.200	2.140
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	78,678	7.520	7.520	7.150
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	32,350	5.400	5.400	5.350
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	38,900	0.590	0.590	0.550
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	33,102	1.470	1.430	1.350
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	10,118	1.640	1.460	1.610
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	33,499	1.020	1.020	0.980
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	4,725	1.410	1.410	1.420
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1,506	5.020	5.020	5.020
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	3,347	1.040	1.030	1.050
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	2,813	3.800	3.800	3.750
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	2,601	1.280	1.200	1.250
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	9,522	1.740	1.740	1.650
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	6,433	1.560	1.560	1.550
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	65,383	3.250	3.250	3.180
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	130,518	1.940	1.940	1.860
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	16,349	1.400	1.400	1.370
EL-ZAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	58,337	2.280	2.280	2.340
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	80,283	1.270	1.370	1.260
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRI	22,254	1.590	1.590	1.540
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	1247347	INDEX NUMBER: 120.94		
	CHANGE	: -1.24%		
GRAND TOTAL	2719183	INDEX NUMBER: 152.50		

PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (13/01/1996 - 17/01/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	35,296	0.720	0.720	0.690
JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	44,967	0.780	0.750	0.750
ARAB FIN INV.CO	91,031	0.990	0.990	0.620
UNION INVESTMENT CORP. 50%	7,050	0.870	0.870	0.840
ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	4,200	0.770	0.770	0.760
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	4,785	0.660	0.660	0.610
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	2,320	0.420	0.420	0.380
NATIONAL CHLORINE INDUSTRIES CO.LTD	5,503	1.710	1.710	1.670
NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO	8,376	0.900	0.900	0.880
NAYRAS DYES & MOULDS	2,401	0.750	0.750	0.730
MID PHARMA	1,030	0.780	0.700	0.770
JORDAN STEEL	39,472	0.980	0.980	0.540
ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	11,227	0.710	0.710	0.700
UNION TOBACCO	28,718	1.250	1.250	1.260
RAZI PHARMACEUTICALS	1,682	0.770	0.770	0.750
INDUSTRIES ENGINEERING	237	0.700	0.780	0.760
INDUSTRIAL CERAMIC	69,612	1.360	1.360	1.230
I.TEXTILE MANUFACTURER	3,160	0.550	0.550	0.500
PEARL SANITARY PAPER CONVERTING	2,924	0.850	0.850	0.780
NATIONAL POULTRY 50%	13,315	0.840	0.840	0.800
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	1,352	1.160	1.160	0.940
NATIONAL MULTY ENG. INDS./NAMICO.	241,554	0.940	0.950	0.810
GRAND TOTAL	620942			

DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordanians are more interested in daily needs

☆☆ POLITICAL MATTERS are no longer on the top of priorities that interest the Jordanian citizen as he is more concerned with daily living requirements. According to an opinion poll, conducted by the communication department of Al Aswaq, "living conditions and employment opportunities" bad become the oumber one priority with interests in political affairs registering a big drop.

Cooducted on a sample of 412 persons spread over four main cities (Amman, Zarqa, Irbid and Salt), the poll revealed that 90.5 per cent of Jordanians rated the standard of living as their highest concern. Interest in party activity was seen at 27.1 per cent of the largest audience and in Parliament sessions at 40.8 per ceot. Unemployment was seen a top priority by 80.2 per cent of the sample, which was divided ioto four age groups — 18 to 28 (30.3 per cent), 29 to 39 (32.5 per cent), 40 to 50 (25.5 per ceot) and over 50 (11.7 per cent).

The opinion poll showed the followiog findings:

— 40.8 per cent are concerned about "foreign labour" or guest workers as they are often described.

— 81 per cent, 80.6 per cent and 79.1 per cent were interested in earnings, housing conditions and taxes.

The percentage of those interested in the development of the peace process was only 44.5 per cent while 40.5 per cent said that regional cooperation was a high interest for them (Al Aswaq).

JIC to sell stakes in three public shareholding companies

☆☆ THE JORDAN Investment Corporation (JIC) intends to sell its stake io three public shareholding companies and has asked for bids to be received not later than Feb. 8, 1996. The bids should be presented to the corporation with a bank guarantee or a certified cheque for an amount equivalent to five per cent of their offer. For sale is 77.93 per cent of the equity io Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex (Hammamat Ma'in) which comprises Ashtar Hotel, the tourist village and other treatment and entertaining facilities set up on a 500-duoum area. This complex has a JD 5 million capital and the JIC shares for sale amount to 3,896,500 shares. JIC is also selling its 75.7 per cent of its equity in the Jordan Company for TV, Radio and Cinema Production, which has a JD 9.7 millioo capital. The company's facilities, which are spread on a 16-dunum of leased land, include a main building which includes the largest studios for technical production in the region as well as all equipmeot. The third company which JIC is disinvesting from is the National Food (Shafa) Processing Company, where the corporation's equity is 77.08 per cent. The facilities include a plant, set up on 500 dunums in Mafraq, to process tomato paste and ketchup. The remaining equity, held by the Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company, will be offered for sale at a later stage; meaning that the whole company, capitalised at JD 7.5 million, would be privatised in the future. According to the JIC director-general, the corporation will subscribe to nearly 414,000 shares of the new share flotation by the Arab International Hotel (AIH) to raise its capital from JD 7 million to JD 9 million. JIC has a 32 per cent equity in AIH (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

Major irrigation project nears completion

☆☆ JD 30 million project to switch from surface irrigation to irrigation by closed and compressed pipes in northern Ghor is expected to be completed next week. The project includes irrigating 72,000 dunoms for a total length of 240 kilometres. This project is the third stage of a scheme to develop the Jordan Valley which started from Karameh and covered southern Shuneh and central Ghor. The project aims at conserving water from evaporation and leaks and is expected to save 20 million cubic metres of water annually or, approximately, the equivalent of reserves at Wadi Al Arab dam. The Jordan Valley Authority will be opening and asphalting a number of roads in the area to serve the agricultural lands. The project, which began in 1993, was financed by the Japanese government with 80 per ceot of the cost (Al Ra'i).

Financial Markets
Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 17/1/96	Tokyo Close Date 18/1/96
Sterling Pound*	1.5235	1.5225**
Deutsche Mark	1.4705	1.4675
Swiss Franc	1.1887	1.1859**
French Franc	5.0235	5.0150**
Japanese Yen	105.65	105.47

* USD Per STG
** European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 18/1/1996

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0799	1.0853
Deutsche Mark	0.4818	0.4843
Swiss Franc	0.5972	0.6002
French Franc	0.1411	0.1418
Japanese Yen*	0.6710	0.6744
Dutch Guilder	0.4303	0.4325
Swedish Krona	******	******
Italian Lira*	0.0447	0.0449
Belgian Franc	******	*******

* Per 100

Other Currencies
Date: 18/1/1996

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8620	1.8780
Lebanese Lira*	0.043835	0.044650
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1898
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8330	1.8410
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933
Greek Drachma*	0.2835	0.3087
Cypriot Pound	1.5080	1.5675

* Per 100

JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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Australian Open

Agassi, Muster struggle, while Chang rolls on

MELBOURNE (AP) — Andre Agassi had to come from behind against a qualifier for the second time. Thomas Muster had to overcome a twisted ankle.

For Michael Chang, it was business as usual.

The fifth-seeded Chang advanced quietly and steadily into the round of 16 at the Australian Open as temperatures climbed Friday. He said he feels he is gaining on the two top seeds — Pete Sampras and Agassi.

Women's top seed Monica Seles ran into her first patch of difficulty after dropping her serve in the first game with a double fault. She ended by reeling off eight straight games, losing just 12 points in that stretch, in a 7-5, 6-0 victory over French player Julie Halard-Decugis.

Agassi wasted no time reasserting his dominance after losing the first set of his third-round match to qualifier Steve Bryan, a fellow American ranked 225th. He won 4-6, 6-0, 6-2, 6-1.

Muster, seeded third and in contention for the top spot in the rankings, twisted his right ankle while backpedaling for a deep shot midway through the second set. He had it taped, saved three set points in a marathon second set, and beat Swedish qualifier Nicklas Kulti 6-4, 7-6 (11-9), 6-4.

Chang, the only one of the top five seeds to win all his matches in straight sets so far, defeated hard-hitting Frenchman Guillaume Raoux 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (8-6). Raoux made the final set tight by coming up with sizzling sharp angles and deft drops, but couldn't match Chang's steadiness.

Defending champion Aggasi needed five sets on Monday to beat qualifier Gaston Etlis of Argentina, although he was hampered then by a swollen knee from a crash into a post on a spiral stairway the previous night. The knee has mended.

Replying testily to questions about his form, he said that against Bryan, "I wasn't expecting him to play with as much offense as he did. ...

And, he said, "I feel like even if I play my 100 per cent today, my 100 per cent the day after tomorrow is going to be even better."

His next opponent will be Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman, ranked 34th, who ousted American Todd Martin, the 15th seed, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 2-6, 6-4 in a nearly three-hour match.

Muster said his ankle hurt for the first few points after he twisted it, but once he kept moving it improved.

Once the tape loosens up a bit and you feel that your confidence is coming back, running balls down, then it was all right," he said, adding that there was no swelling or ligament damage.

At the beginning, he said, "I wasn't hitting the ball as I should have been... actually, after I twisted, I got a bit of adrenalin, I guess, and I think I played better after that."

The Austrian clay court specialist said the surface used here is very sticky, making it easy to twist an ankle.

Top seed Sampras, who plays his third-round match Saturday, said earlier that the sticky footing left his feet and body feeling sore after matches.

No. 4 seed Boris Becker of Germany, who has come from behind in two five-set matches, agreed that the court, especially when it gets hot, "Is much harder on the body than a hard court of grass court."

After four days of temperatures in the 70s F (20s celsius), the heat was approaching the 90s (in the 30s celsius) Friday

Chang said he wasn't bothered by the heat or the court.

While declining to predict his fortunes in this tournament, where he went out in the semifinals last year, Chang said he felt Sampras and Agassi had reached their peaks, "and I kind of still feel my best years of tennis are still ahead of me."

Eighth seed Jim Courier of the United States toiled for four and a half hours before beating Australian Todd Woodbridge, 6-3, 6-7 (2/7), 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 8-6 in a late night match.

Courier will now play South African Marcos Ondruska in the round of 16.

No. 11 Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands withdrew with a lower back injury with his score against French qualifier Jean-Philippe Fleurian tied at one set each and 2-2. Fleurian earlier had survived a five-set match against Swedish player Stefan Edberg, a former No.1 who is retiring at the end of this year.

Seles, a three-time Australian Open Champion, said her play in the second set was her best since arriving down under this time, even though she won a warmup tournament last week.

In the second set's fifth game, Halard-Decugis appeared to have beaten her with a lub-drop shot combination, but Seles dashed in and flicked back a winner.

Germany's Boris Becker points to the Swedish fans after defeating Thomas Johanson in their second round match at the Australian Open. Becker defeated his Swedish opponent in five sets 4-6, 3-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 (Reuters photo)

Defeoding champioo Mary Pierce of France shows her frustration during her second round match against Russia's Elena Likhovtseva at the Australian Open. Pierce lost in straight sets 6-4, 6-4 (Reuters photo)

Pierce:queen one day, commoner the next

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Mary Pierce lost more than her Australian Open crown when she was dethroned here Thursday by young Russian Elena Likhovtseva.

The French fourth seed tumbled out of the women's top 10 rankings as well after her shock 6-4, 6-4 second round loss to 49th-ranked Likhovtseva.

Pierce was defending 836 ranking points from last year's final win over Arantxa Sanchez Vicario when she claimed her first major title.

The loss to Tikhovtseva netted a miserly 30 rankings points and threatens her quest for a favourable top four seeding for the French Open and Wimbledon Grand Slam tournaments in June-July.

The upset loss ends Pierce's 18-month stint in the top 10 and continues a troublesome time for the top-ranked French player over the last 12 months.

Pierce was dumped out of last year's French Open by Croatia's Iva Majoli in the fourth round; fell to compatriot Nathalie Tauziat in the second round at Wimbledon and was ousted in the U.S. Open third round by American Amy Frazier.

Twenty-one-year-old Pierce put on a brave face at her post-match conference, saying: "I am disappointed that I am out so early, but there's always next year and it gives me more time to prepare for my next tournaments."

Pierce also faced another dilemma when her mentor, American guru Nick Bollettieri, was forced to divide his time between her and his latest recruit, Australian powerserver Mark Philippoussis.

Philippoussis was playing on centre court at the same time Pierce was struggling out on Court One, forcing Bollettieri to share matches as a spectator.

Pierce said she saw nothing wrong in having to share Bollettieri as her coach with Philippoussis.

"That's only to be expected when he's working with two people. Mark and I understand that Nick is working with both of us so we share his time," she said.

Time will tell if that arrangement continues through the year.

Real Madrid out of Spanish Cup

MADRID (R) — Real Madrid were knocked out of the Spanish Cup on Thursday when they could only manage a 2-1 win at home to Espanyol, who had taken the first leg 4-1.

The 17-times champions could hardly have started the game in a worse way when Espanyol's Jordi Lardin escaped an off-side trap.

The pace of Lardin, who scored hat-trick in the first leg, continued to give the Real defence problems throughout the game.

Real pulled one back midway through the second half when Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano outjumped the Espanyol defence at a corner to set up a simple chance for Raul Gonzalez to score.

Cowboys favourites in Jan. 28 Super Bowl

NEW YORK (AP) — Why will this Super Bowl be unlike all others?

The obvious signs say it will be the same, a rout by the NFC team, the Dallas Cowboys over the Pittsburgh Steelers. Dallas opened as an 11½-point favourite for the National Football League championship game, jumped to 12½ and will probably continue to climb.

It should.

After a four-game funk, the Cowboys have played like their last three games like they are supposed to. That includes Sunday's 38-27 NFC title game win over Green Bay.

"We're going home," Michael Irvin said of Dallas's third Super Bowl Trip in four seasons.

And the NFC team always wins — 11 in a row going into the Jan. 28 game at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe — and usually wins big.

Only two of those games — the 49ers' 20-16 win over the Bengals in 1989 and the Giants' 20-19 victory over the Bills in 1991 — were competitive.

But here are some factors that could make all those millions actually watch the 30th anniversary game.

— The coaching factor.

"I've never been to the big one," Barry Switzer says. "They tell me it's a lot of fun."

It's also work.

The Cowboys rallied around Switzer on Sunday. But it's Barry's staff that draws up the game plan.

Ernie Zampese, the offensive coordinator, was smart enough to do the obvious — give the ball to Emmitt Smith and have Troy Aikman throw to Michael Irvin.

But Zampese doesn't align the defenses, and Brett Favre exploited a couple of horrible alignments for touchdowns on Sunday. Most notable was one that left Larry Brown on an island against Robert Brooks and led to a 73-yard touchdown pass that prevented a Dallas blowout and help keep the Packers in the game until midway through the final quarter.

— The slash factor.

Yes, Kordell Stewart ("Tiptoe on the white lines") was a factor in the AFC title game, although the Colts had a pretty good idea what was coming when he came on the field. But the Dallas defense is easier to confuse as the Indianapolis defence.

— The Bam and Erric show.

— The steelers have the potential to run with Bam Morris and Erric Pegram, a better tandem than Edgar Bennett's solo act for the Packers. If they can get a ground game going, particularly by ramming Morris up the middle against Robert Jones, it will take pressure off Neil O'Donnell.

— The tradition factor.

Bill Cowher, the meanest jaw in the game now that Don Shula is gone, should rerun old Super Bowl tapes for his guys particularly the Dallas games in 1976 and 1979. Yancey Thigpen, Ernie Mills and Stewart can watch Lynn Swann make acrobatic catches and realise that there is a tradition of Pittsburgh wide receivers playing at their best in big games.

African Nations Cup

Ghana reach quarters

PORT ELIZABETH (AFP) — Ghana became the first team to qualify for the quarter-finals with a 2-1 victory over Tunisia in the African Nations Cup here on Friday.

Torino's Abedi Pele hooked the ball over keeper Chokrio El Ouaer nine minutes after the break, but Tunisian substitute Imed Ben Younes equalised from a free-kick inside the area in the 74th minute — two minutes after coming on.

But Charles Akonnor, fed by substitute Felix Aboagye, raced through to hit Ghana's winner in the 79th minute.

In the first half, Tunisia were unlucky not to be awarded a penalty in the 38th minute when Joseph Addo appeared to trip striker Adel Sellimi.

And Pele had a penalty turned round the post by El Ouaer in the second period.

Egypt's coach ponders Ramadan match schedule

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Egypt coach Ruud Krol on Friday voiced fears of playing their African Nations Cup match against South Africa next week in the heat of the day, three days after his players begin Ramadan.

Muslims observe Ramadan, abstention from eating during daylight hours, for 30 consecutive days during the year.

This year it begins on Sunday and Holland's Krol, who played in both the 1974 and 1978 World Cup finals, said: "It's a pity the African Football Federation (CAF) could not have given us evening games. Our afternoon game with South Africa will be terrible because of the heat."

Krol feared the 35 degree plus temperatures, which he believed could weaken his players just after they changed their eating patterns.

Krol said he would have to carefully plan their practice times and the intensity of their training on the run-up to the match to conserve their energy.

Egypt lost 2-1 to Cameroon on Thursday evening, leaving them in second spot in Group A behind South Africa, but ahead of both Cameroon and Angola.

The group is now wide open and Egypt will aim for at least a point against South Africa on Wednesday (kick-off 1230 GMT), and hope Cameroon fail to beat Angola at the same time in Durban.

Krol was unhappy Egypt did not convert their chances against Cameroon. "We just could not score. I was pleased with the way we played, but our strikers need to score goals," Krol said.

Franeois Omam-Biyik scored a 36th minute penalty for Cameroon, before Aly Maher eqnalised with an opportunist goal four minutes after the break.

But Camerooo striker Alphonse Tchami, of Argentinian side Boca Juniors, raced up the left flank in the 60th minute to score through the legs of Egypt keeper Nader El Said.

Krol reported 30-year-old Et Zamalek midfielder El Kass, who was substituted during the match, had a leg problem and would need further tests.

Diary at the African Nations Cup:

South Africa's derogatory nickname: There has been much debate over the name the fans have given to the South African side in the African Nations Cup.

Called "Bafana Bafana" — literally, "The Boys, The Boys" — the name is seen as having derogatory connotations stemming from the apartheid era when all black males were dismissively labelled "Boy."

But the name has stuck despite criticism.

The leading Afrikaans language newspaper Beeld has come up with a novel and light-hearted reason to change the nickname.

"If it depends on nicknames," says the publication, South Africa's Bafana Bafana do not have the proverbial cat's chance of winning the Africa Nations Cup.

"Compare it (the nickname) with Algeria's Desert warriors, Angola's Black Panthers, Burkina Faso's Stallions and Cameroon's Indomitable Lions..."

Mackaya'a love of football: Perhaps Gabonese player Brice Mackaya enjoys his football more than anyone else at the African Nations Cup.

Durig their 2-1 loss to Liberia, Mackaya saw his number 12 number shown, as his coach wanted to replace him with Aurelien Bekogo-Zolo in the 72nd minute.

But, instead of coming over to the touchline, Mackaya refused to come off! As onlookers watched in astonishment, he remained in the thick of the action, flagrantly ignoring signals from the dugout.

However, Mackaya eventually did agree to come in for his early bath — about 10 minutes after first being asked!

Masinga in shop window: Sonth African striker Phil Masinga, who scored in South Africa's opening African Nations Cup victory against Cameroon, may be leaving English club Leeds at the end of the season, according to speculation here.

Anthony Yeboah's introduction at Leeds has left Masinga in his shadow and he is reportedly unsettled as a result.

Swedish and Turkish clubs are said to be keeping an eye on Masinga, bought by Leeds for just $300,000, but now valued at around $1.5 million.

Afrikaans interest in football: There is a rapidly growing interest in football among the largely rugby-playing Afrikaans South Africans, says Stix Morewa, executive president of the South African Football Association.

"Wherever I go Afrikaans-speaking people engage me in conversation about soccer — on aircraft, in lifts and at big matches," says Morewa.

"They care. They ask questions. That is what really counts."

Tourist police to prevent muggings: Tourists in Johannesburg, one of the venues for the African Nations Cup, have been advised to take advantage of the tourist police unit to try and prevent muggings in the city centre.

Supt. Gert Myburgh, assistant commander of Johannesburg's pro-active policing, said foreign visitors deciding to look around central Johannesburg could contact the unit and arrange for escorts.

Myburgh spoke of six recent muggings where tourists were robbed by gangs of between four and six people.

Chicago Bulls' Scottie Pippen (right) reaches to keep the ball inbounds as he moves around Philadelphia 76ers' Vernon Maxwell (left) in the first quarter in Chicago (Reuters photo)

Rockets lose to Celtics as Olajuwon scores 51

TORONTO (R) — The Boston Celtics and Detroit Pistols pulled off a couple of upsets Thursday but the Toronto Raptors could not quite beat the league-leading Chicago Bulls and Michael Jordan Thursday.

Jordan had 38 points and nine rebounds to lead the Chicago Bulls to their 10th consecutive victory, 92-89.

Jordan had six of the last 11 points for Chicago (33-3), which got eight points and 13 rebounds from Dennis Rodman.

Damon Stoudamire had 26 points and 12 assists for the Raptors, who have lost their last three games.

"This was one of those games where we had to grind it out and go in and to get a win any way possible," Jordan said.

"We were playing against a team that was very enthused and very excited about the crowd. We were able to hold them off down the stretch. I'm really happy with this win."

Jordan praised Stoudamire. "He's quicker than me. He's a tough little player. Down the stretch he got hot and kept in the game."

"We attacked them, played them physical inside and let Damon go to the basket." Toronto coach Brendan Malone said. "I'm not happy that we lost that game. We had to win this game on our home court.

"All great players step up in the moment of truth. The best player ever to play this game (Jordan) showed up tonight."

In Houston, Dee Brown scored six of his 14 points in the final 3:15 to help the Celtics beat the NBA champion Rockets 108-106, spoiling a season-high 51 points by Hakeem Olajuwon.

Dino Radja scored 23 points for Boston, which snapped a three-game losing streak and won for just the third time in 13 games and the first time in nine road games.

Olajuwon, who hit 20-of-37 shots from the field and 11-of-14 from the line, added 14 rebounds in his second career 50-point effort.

"All I can do is give my best effort and that's all I can do and then I can sleep at night," Olajuwon said. "It's a tough loss, there is not much more I can say."

Clyde Drexler secored 21 points, 20 in the first three quarters, as Houston had its three-game winning streak snapped, playing without the injured Robert Horry, Sam Cassell and Mario Elie.

"I couldn't be more proud of this team with the way they performed the last two nights," Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich said. "I can't believe how positive I feel after a loss."

At Detroit, Grant Hill made a layup with 17 second left to snap a tie and lift the Pistons to their fifth straight home win, 100-98 over the midwest-leading San Antonio Spurs.

Allan Houston got 28 points and a season-high eight assists and Otis Thorpe had 25 points and 12 rebounds for Detroit, which won for the seventh time in nine games. Hill had 19 points and eight rebounds.

"That was a tremendous win for us in a lot of ways." Pistons coach Doug Collins said.

David Robinson got 37 points and eight rebounds, Vinny Del Negro had 18 points and Avery Johnson added 16 points and seven assists for San Antonio, which had its five-game winning streak snapped and lost for just the third time in 17 games.

"We didn't execute at the end," Spurs coach Bob Hill said. "They deserve a lot of credit."

In Sacramento, Mitch Richmond scored 38 points as the Kings took a 105-100 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers for their sixth straight home win.

Richmond made all 15 of his free throws as the Kings made improved their home record to 14-4.

Brian Grant scored 19 points and Olden Polunice had 12 points, a season-high 16 rebounds and a careet-best six blocks for Sacramento, which won for just the second time in six games in returning from a five-game road trip.

Aaron McKie scored 20 points for Portland, which played without Rod Stickland and Clifford Robinson in having its four-game winning streak snapped.

In Milwaukee, Vin Baker had 24 points and eight rebounds and Glenn Robinson added 22 points and nine rebounds.

RESULTS

Chicago	92	Toronto	89
Detroit	100	San Antonio	98
Boston	108	Houston	106
Milwaukee	100	Golden State	96
Cleveland	98	Vancouver	90
Sacramento	105	Portland	100

European Basketball

Greeks back on the title trail again

MADRID (R) — Greek basketball clubs got back on the title trail on Thursday after a disappointing start to the new year with convincing victories in the European Championship semifinal series.

Big-spending Panathinaikos travelled to Croatia to beat Cibona Zagreb 93-82, with expensive ex-NBA star Dominique Wilkins top scoring with 31 points.

Olympiakos, beaten in the last two weeks by CSKA Moscow and Benetton Treviso, bounced back in a tough-looking fixture in Turkey to beat the improving Ulkerspor 95-60.

Panathinaikos top Group A on 17 points with Barcelona, who won Wednesday's clash against Real Madrid 94-82.

CSKA Moscow cootinue at top of Group A after their eighth win of the season from 10 matches. Thursday's victims were Unicaja Malaga who went down 81-67.

Second-placed Benetton Treviso kept up their challenge with a comfortable 95-84 victory over French champions Olympique D'Antibes.

With four games of the current series left, CSKA, the most successful club this seasoo, look sure to make the next stage.

☆ CSKA Moscow (Russia) beat Unicaja Malaga (Spain) 81-67 (45-30).

☆ Benetton Treviso (Italy) beat Olympique D'Antibes (France) 95-84 (52-37).

☆ Pau-Orthez (France) beat Bologna (Italy) 74-69.

☆ Barcelona (Spain) beat Real Madrid (Spain) 94-82 (49-42).

☆ Bayer Leverkusen (Germany) beat Iraklis (Greece) 81-72 (halftime 36-32).

STANDINGS

Group A

	W	L	Pts
CSKA Moscow (Russia)	8	2	18
Benetton Treviso (Italy)	7	3	17
Olympiakos Piraeus (Greece)	6	4	16
Ulkerspor (Turkey)	5	5	15
Bayer Leverkusen (Germany)	4	6	14
Unicaja Malaga (Spain)	4	6	14
Olympique Antibes (France)	4	6	14
Iraklis Salonika (Greece)	2	8	12

Group B

Barcelona (Spain)	7	3	17
Panathinaikos (Greece)	7	3	17
Real Madrid (Spain	6	4	16
Cibona Zagreb (Croatia)	5	5	15
Pau Orthez (France)	5	5	15
Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel)	5	5	15
Virtus Bologna (Italy)	4	6	14
Benfica (Portugal)	1	9	11

CONCACAF Gold Cup

Brazil beat U.S. to reach final

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Brazil defeated the United States 1-0 on Thursday night on an own-goal by U.S. defender Marcelo Balboa in the 18th minute and advanced to the title game of the Gold Cup.

Savio, who bedeviled the U.S. defence with curling corner kicks throughout the game, sent a cross from the left side that bounced off Balboa and into the U.S. goal.

Brazil will play for the championship Sunday against the winner of Friday night's semifinal in San Diego between Mexico and Guatemala.

The United States will play for third place Sunday against the loser of that game.

The United States has lost eight games it has ever played against Brazil, outscored 23-3. However, the results are tightening, with the United States losing 1-0 the last three times, including the 1994 World Cup. The last time the United States scored against Brazil was in 1930.

Brazil, competing with its Under-23 with an eye toward the Atlanta Olympics, is a guest in the nine-nation tournament for countries from Nortb and Central America and the Caribbean.

The Brazilians turned on the pressure early, with Jamelli crashing a low shot off the post in the seventh minute, only moments after Balboa had cleared a perfect cross into the area with a diving header.

In the 18th minute, Savio lifted a pass to Jamelli, whose beader was barely deflected by goalie Kasey Keller.

With midfielder Claudio Reyna replacing Thomas Dooley in the 29th minute, the United States began mounting more settled attacks as the Brazilians struggled to clear the ball from the box.

The United States came closest to scoring in the 42nd minute after a brilliant steal by John Harkes in the penalty area. But striker Eric Wynalda hesitated in front of the open goal and was foiled by a sliding Carlinhos.

Newcastle to focus on Premier League title

LONDON (R) — Newcastle, locked out of two cup competitions in the space of eight days, host lowly Bolton on Saturday as they turn their focus to bringing the Premier League title to St. James' Park for the first time since 1927.

With the chance of a treble destroyed in losses to Arsenal in the quarter-finals of the League Cup last week and then on penalties to Chelsea in their F.A. Cup third-round replay at home two days ago, Kevin Keegan's team can now chase the league title without distraction.

It is undoubtedly the one they want most anyway and future congestion will not be a problem with 16 games in four weeks.

Keegan's main concerns are now injuries and suspensions. They hold a nine-point lead with a game in hand over their principal rivals Manchester United.

Paris skaters Jenni Meno and Todd Sand perform a split triple toss as they skate to their third consecutive national championship with their strong performance during the free skating competition at the U.S. National Figure Skating Championships in San Jose, California (Reuteres photo)

U.S. Figure Skating Championships

Meno and Sand take 3rd straight title

SAN JOSE, California (AP) — Jenni Meno and Todd Sand's passionate free skate Thursday night gave them their third straight U.S. Figure Skating Championships pairs title.

It also delivered a message to the rest of the skating community: The first U.S. gold medal in pairs since 1979 in the World Championships is a longshot no more.

"We were a little more nervous here trying to defend our title for the third time," Meno said. Skating ardently to Puccini's "Nesun Dorma," Meno and Sand earned first-place votes from seven of nine judges. Kyoko Ina and Jason Dungjen were runners-up for the third successive year, while Shelby lyons, 14, and Brian Wells finished third and will make their first trip to worlds.

"I'm really proud of Shelby and how far we've come and all the hard work we put into this paid off," Wells said. "It wasn't hard. It was fun."

Meno and Sand, who were married last summer, took a bronze medal in the 1995 World Championships. That was only the fourth medal, all bronze, for the United States since Tai Babilonia and Randy Gardner won the gold in '79.

The third successive U.S. Championship was the most for a pair since Kitty and Peter Carruthers won four in a row (1981-84). Sand also won the championship in 1991 with Natsha Kuchika.

Ina and Dungjen skated just before Meno and Sand and except for his slipup late in their routine, they were superb. Their playful program to "Slaughter on tenth avenue" featured two excellent throws and outstanding lifts.

"It's a little bit frustrating," Dungjen said of another second-place finish. "This year, I think we really picked up on them. It could have gone either way."

Meno and Sand were better despite her falling on a throw triple Salchow. Their lifts were as good as they've ever been, and the final moments of their performance were magical.

There was no cooling off Todd Eldredge in the men's short program, which he won earlier in the day.

A year after Elderdge capped an inspiring comeback with his third national championship, he's still the hottest male skater around.

Using the same program that catapulted him to the 1995 title after three years of injuries and ennui, Eldredge placed first with all nine judges.

He began with a strong triple axel-double toe loop combination, and Eldredge, 24, of South Chatham, Massachusetts, just built on that, putting him closer to a fourth U.S. crown.

He also nailed a triple Lutz and double axel with no problems and his spins were fast and precise.

"Any time I go out there and skate a clean short program, I am happy," Eldredge said. "Obviously anybody in the top three in the short program has the opportunity to win the whole event. This got me in the running."

Scott Davis, the 1993 and '94 U.S. Champion, was second, followed by local star Rudy Galindo. The top three qualify for the world championships.

First Division Basketball Championship

Jazireh defeat titleholders Al Ahli

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Jazireh Friday upset the Kingdom's basketball champions Al Ahli 76-73, first half 31-30, in their First Division Basketball Championship match at the Sports Palace.

The result was a major surprise for fans and officials of the game as Al Ahli have held an undisputed reign over the game for the past three consecutive seasons while Al Jazireh were third place finishers during the past three years.

The result of the match gave former champions Al Orthodoxi a chance to regain the title they last won in 1991. Al Ahli will meet Al Orthodoxi in the first round final on Jan. 25 (see details in tomorrow's story).

North Korea offers to co-host 2002 World Cup

SEOUL (AP) — North Korea has expressed willingness to co-host the 2002 World Cup soccer tournament with rival south Korea, South Korean soccer officials said Friday.

Such a move, if successful, could boost South Korea's competition with Japan for soccer's biggest event and — more importantly — help improve relations between the two Koreas, bitter enemies who aren't even on speaking terms.

But long, difficult negotiations were sure to come. The north also made a last-minute offer to co-host the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul. Several months of talks yielded no agreement.

The two Koreas — the communist oorth and capitalist south — never signed a peace treaty following their bloody 1950-53 war.

Their border is the world's most heavily guarded, and they have not spoken to each other officially since last summer, when talks over rice aid from the south for the impoverished north broke down in Beijing. That was their first contact in more than a year.

Officials of the (South) Korea Foothall Federation said the north's intention to co-host the 2002 World Cup was conveyed through FIFA, soccer's governing body.

Blatter's letter acknowledged receiving a fax from North Korea on Jan. 8 — a five days after it belatedly agreed to attend the Summer Olympics this year in Atlanta — and a followup reminder last Monday.

A copy of the response from FIFA general secretary J.S. Blatter said his organisation "cannot intervene in this matter" at this stage of the bid procedure. The official bids were submitted in late October. Voting is scheduled forJune 1.

"Your idea of a North-South joint hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup is a matter you have to discuss directly with your sister association in Seoul," Blatter wrote to the North Korea soccer federation.

South Korean officials had no immediate comment.

The announcement of the north's offer came as a surprise because the reclusive, hardline country recently has been stepping up rhetoric against the south.

Icy relations got a further chill with the defection by two people from the North Korean embassy in Zambia, including the wife of a high-ranking diplomat. The north accused the south of kidnapping and warned of unspecified retaliation.

But the north's economy is in shambles, with widespread shortages of food, fuel and other goods, and it reportedly has become increasingly desperate for hard currency that visitors for the World Cup would provide.

It suffered widespread flood damage last summer and has asked the international community for millions of dollars in aid.

Seoul's decision to reject the North's offer to co-host the 1988 Olympics sparked anti-government protests by radical students in South Korea, both before and during the Games.

The two countries have cooperated in sports before, putting together joint teams for the World Table Tennis Championships in 1990 and the World Youth Soccer Championship a year later. Further attempts at cooperation fell through due to rising tensions.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠A 7 6 ♥J 5 ♦K Q 10 9 4 ♣A Q 6 3

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What action do you take?

Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠10 7 6 3 ♥K Q 8 5 ♦Q 7 ♣Q 8 3

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♣	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	?	

What do you bid now?

Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠K 9 8 ♥A 10 ♦A Q 7 5 ♣J 8 5 3

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

What do you bid now?

Q. 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠4 ♥A K Q 7 3 ♦A 5 ♣K J 8 5 5

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

What do you bid now?

Q. 5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠K J 9 4 3 ♥A 7 ♦A J 8 5 4 2 ♣Void

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♣
?			

What action do you take?

Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠8 7 5 3 ♥9 7 4 2 ♦Q J 7 2 ♣7

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♣	Pass	?	

What action do you take?

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POCAHONTAS
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5 p.m.
Sylvester Stallone....in
JUDGE DREDD
Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

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* Batman Forever
Shows: 3:30
* DISCLOSURE
Shows: 5:30

AMMOUN THEATRE & CINEMA/TEL: 618274 - 618275
The popular star Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi, and Mahmoud Hamida in
The Woman that Shook the Throne of Egypt
Show: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
The Lion King
Show: 12:30, 3:30, 5

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155
Theplay
"Ahlan Tatbie"
Welcome Normalisatior
Shows: 8:30 p.m.
For reservation call 625155

Bahrain police battle protesters after 'sabotage'

MANAMA (Agencies) — Bahrain security forces clashed with anti-government Shi'ite Muslim protesters and arrested several people, residents said on Friday.

Residents could not confirm claims by an exiled opposition group that some protesters were wounded in the clashes.

They said the unrest erupted late on Thursday in a number of Shi'ite villages in western Bahrain and that heavy police presence was seen on Friday in several areas. Several people were arrested," they added.

The Interior Ministry said Friday a wave of fires, bombings and other acts of "sabotages" hit several Shi'ite areas of Bahrain.

An Interior Ministry spokesman, cited by the official Bahraini news agency GNA, said these "acts of sabotage are part of a criminal plan to destabilise the country and hurt its economic interests."

The unrest was carried out by "members of extremist and terrorist organisations abroad that are exploiting mosques and religious sanctuaries to carry out its criminal plan," the official said.

Bahraini authorities said on Thursday that a home-made time bomb exploded at the Meridien Hotel here during an international oil conference without causing any casualties.

Several months of rioting and violence erupted in Bahrain in December 1994 after the Sunni-led government arrested a Shi'ite Muslim cleric who had demanded political reform and the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975.

Bahraini officials announced the arrests on Jan. 9 of three Bahrainis who had exploded grenades in two shopping malls in Manama without causing casualties.

Security was increased at entrances to shopping centres and hotels after the Dec. 31 blasts.

The authorities summoned opposition leaders to the Interior Ministry last Saturday and ordered them to stop using mosques to "spread subversion" following a new wave of unrest, which has been less violent.

The exiled Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, in a statement sent to an international news organisation in Nicosia, warned the government against the consequences of what it said was its decision to fire live ammunition to quell unrest.

"Many citizens were wounded in yesterday's confrontations," the group said.

Diplomats earlier said that government troops often used rubber bullets and tear-gas to disperse demonstrators but with restraint.

At least 13 civilians and three policemen have been killed and hundreds arrested since disturbances first erupted. Some were later released.

On Friday, police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse supporters who gathered outside the home of Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri, who was earlier prevented from preaching at two mosques in Manama, according to Bahraini sources.

The sheikh, who has been warned by the authorities three times in the past week to stop using mosques to "spread subversion," was later able to preach at the Zin Al Abidin mosque closest to his home at Bani Jamra.

Predominantly Shiite areas of Bahrain remained tense late Friday, diplomats and other people living in the country told AFP by phone.

Bahrain has indirectly blamed Iran for the trouble, but Tehran has denied supporting the Shiite-led opposition groups.

On Thursday, Bahrain's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohamamd Ben Mubarak Al Khalifa met Abbas Maleki, the Iranian deputy foreign minister, to discuss questions of common interest, GNA said.

Mitterrand doctor fights book ban

PARIS (AFP) — The one-time personal doctor of late French President Francois Mitterrand fought back Friday after a Paris court, citing violation of medical confidentiality, banned his book claiming the former head of state had lied for years about his cancer.

Claude Gubler told the daily Le Monde that before his death on Jan. 8, Mr. Mitterrand knew of his plan to publish the book "Le Grand Secret" (The Big Secret), and claimed he would give any profits from the book to charity.

Police interviewed Dr. Gobler, 61, on Friday after a complaint by France's Order of Doctors alleging violation of medical confidentiality.

On Thursday, a court in Paris ruled on a demand by Mr. Mitterrand's family to seize the book, alleging invasion of privacy, and banned its distribution by the publishers Plon.

The president of the court, Jacqueline Cochard, set a fine of 1,000 francs ($200) for every copy of the book sold by Plon in defiance of the ban.

Mr. Mitterrand's widow Danielle and his three children issued a writ Wednesday against Dr. Gobler as the public snapped up copies of the book. The 45,000 copies of the first print were sold out before the ban was announced.

The book alleges that the Socialist leader, who died last week, knew he had cancer from 1981 but ordered it be kept secret for more than a decade in violation of a pledge to be completely open about his state of health.

The book also claims Mr. Mitterrand was unfit to govern from late 1994, spending much of the time in bed.

Dr. Gubler complained he was obliged by Mr. Mitterrand to publish untruthful medical bulletins on the president's health.

"If I make any money out of this book," Dr. Gubler told Le Monde, "I will immediately give it to charity."

EILAT CELEBRATION: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres thank the chef after Mr. Peres hosted a dinner Thursday night in honour of the Crown Prince and a Jordanian delegation at the Red Sea port of Aqaba following the signing earlier in the day at Aqaba of the last four agreements stipulated in the October 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty (see page one) (AFP photo)

Ciller given chance to form government

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey's caretaker Prime Minister Tansu Ciller said on Friday she had been given the chance to form a new government after inconclusive general elections last month.

"The president has given me the task of forming a government as head of the DYP (True Path Party)," she told reporters after a meeting with President Suleyman Demirel.

The post of the premier-designate was vacated earlier on Friday by Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan who failed to find a coalition partner among the secularist parties.

Mr. Erbakan's Welfare Party came first at the polls with 158 seats in the 550-member parliament. Ms. Ciller's DYP has 135 deputies, two more than than the rival Motherland Party of fellow conservative Mesut Yilmaz.

Ms. Ciller has tried to set up a coalition with Mr. Yilmaz but personal rivalry between the two has hindered the bid. The conservatives would also need the support of left-wing deputies to win a parliamentary vote of confidence.

Mr. Erbakan gave himself a week to form a coalition after Mr. Demirel asked him on Jan. 9 to head Turkey's next government.

But after failing to persuade leaders of Turkey's four other parliamentary parties to join him in a coalition, Mr. Erbakan finally conceded defeat, the spokesman said.

Ms. Ciller and Mr. Yilmaz will come under heavy pressure by the secular-oriented political establishment, as well as from business circles and the military, to form a coalition to shut out the Islamists.

Sudan: New York verdicts political

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — A Sudanese lawyer said the sentences passed against four Sudanese convicted of plotting to blow up New York-area landmarks were meant to damage the image of Islamic political groups.

"This was a politial trial which aimed at distorting the image of the Islamic movements, labelling them as terrorists," said Hassan Abdullah Hassan, who heads of committee formed to support the four Sudanese convicted with six others in the trial.

The spiritual leader of the group, Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, was sentenced to life together with Al Sayyid Nosair, who was convicted for his role in the bomb plot and for killing militant anti-Arab rabbi Meir Kahane in New York in 1990.

The eight others received prison terms Wednesday ranging from 25 years to 57 years, including the four Sudanese, Tareq Al Hassan, Fares Khaalfalla, Amir Abdul Gani and Fadel Abdul Gani.

They were convicted of plotting to bomb the United Nations, Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) offices, two tunnels and a bridge in the New York area in an effort to force a change in U.S. policies in the Middle East.

Egyptian President Hosni Muharak accused Sudan and Iran of giving refuge to extremists and urged Western nations to crack down on militant guerrillas.

In an interview with the French daily Le Figaro, Mr. Muharak also hailed Palestinian elections on Saturday as a big step forward and predicted they would create a more relaxed atmosphere for peace talks in the Middle East.

Asked which countries he believed gave support to militants, Mr. Muharak said: "Sudan apparently sees an interest in having fundamentalists on its territory.

"This is, however, not in the nature of the Sudanese people, which is very generous. The problem is that there are people in that country who help fundamentalists to earn money. For example, they sell them passports."

Asked whether all sanctions on Iran should be lifted, he said: "When Iran stops supporting these terrorist groups, then we will be able to lift the embargo."

"One day or another, countries who give shelter to terrorists will pay the price," he said. "The West must take severe measures. We need great firmness with these people."

Sudan has rejected Egyptian charges that it provided training for members of militant groups. Egypt has accused Sudan of providing refuge for gunmen who carried out a failed assassination attempt on Mr. Mubarak in Ethiopia in June.

The international guerrilla known as Carlos "the Jackal" was seized by French agents in Sudan in August, 1994, and was spirited to Paris. France at the time praised Sudan for cooperation over the arrest.

Referring to the Palestinian elections, Mr. Mubarak said that "this vote represents a big step forward."

"I think that things will calm down," he said, saying the "peace process should be able to continue in a much-more relaxed atmosphere." In the longer term, he said he believed that Syria and Israel would also begin peace talks.

Arafat seeks democratic legitimacy with polls...

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — For nearly three decades, Yasser Arafat has led the Palestinian people by virtue of being the head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

On Saturday, he hopes to become the first democratically-elected leader of the Palestinian people.

The first Palestinian general election gives Mr. Arafat the democratic credentials that his Western sponsors deem vital for Middle East peacemaking. For him, the elections are another step towards Palestinian statehood.

"This is a historic event because these legislative elections are a good tiding for the establishment of our Palestinian state with sacred Jerusalem as its capital," Mr. Arafat said on Friday, the eve of the historic poll.

A hero for some and a ruthless guerrilla for others, Mr. Arafat is instantly recognisable to the world with his stubble of beard and chequered headdress folded carefully in the shape of the Palestinian homeland for which he has fought tirelessly.

Accustomed to having the odds stacked against him, Mr. Arafat took perhaps his biggest gamble of all when he signed an interim peace accord with his old Nemesis, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, in Washington on Sept. 13, 1993.

Returning in 1994 to the Gaza Strip — part of the embryo homeland under his acord with Israel — the one-time symbol of Palestinian unity found himself facing militants attacking his Israeli peace partner and threatening their deal.

The accord gave Palestinians limited self-rule on part of the territories seized by the Jewish state in the 1967 war.

Opponents said the accord would leave Mr. Arafat confined to Gaza. But last September he sealed another stage of his accord, widening self-rule to the West Bank and providing for the first Palestinian general elections in history.

Mr. Arafat is widely favoured to win against his obscure challenger, 72-year-old Samiha Khalil, a woman activist critical of his peace deal. Opinion polls show Mr. Arafat would win more than 80 per cent of the votes.

He has survived plots and assassination attempts — and even an air crash — since becoming PLO chairman in 1969. There is no one of his stature in the PLO to replace him.

"The thing that keeps me going, the most precious thing that is always on my mind, is the regaining of dignity for the Palestinian people, and restoring the name of Palestine to the map of the Middle East," he says.

Mr. Rabin, who as defence minister once told his troops to break Palestinian bones, complained that negotiating with the wily PLO chief was like haggling in Middle East bazaar.

Short and bald, Mr. Arafat hardly cuts a heroic figure. But to Palestinians — even those lukewarm about his policies — he is known avuncularly as Abu Ammar, his nom de guerre, or just as Al Khityar, "The Old Man."

Born in Cairo on Aug. 24, 1929, he took part in battles between Arabs and Jews in the emerging Israel in 1948.

He set up a successful engineering business in Kuwait before devoting himself to the cause of gaining a Palestinian homeland in 1965.

He grabbed the headlines as spokesman for a new breed of Palestinian — the young fedayeen, dispossessed, angry and dedicated to armed struggle against the Jewish state.

The defeat of the Arabs by Israel in the 1967 war led to the Palestinians taking their cause into their own hands. Mr. Arafat toured the globe with all the trappings of a head of state and become a champion to many in the Third World.

Mr. Arafat remained head of the PLO throughout the turbulent 1970s and the expulsion from Beirut after the 1982 Israel invasion of Lebanon.

In the 1980s, he began a new diplomatic tack towards peace and basked in international sympathy generated by the uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied territories.

In 1988, the Palestinian parliament-in-exile chose Mr. Arafat as president of the State of Palestine, recognised by more than 70 countries.

For years a bachelor who said he was tied to the Palestinian struggle, Mr. Arafat married Suha Tawil, a Palestinian Christian researcher half his age in 1992. They had a daughter last year.

A devout Muslim who does not drink alcohol, Mr. Arafat shuns luxury to boost his image among poor Gazans he cannot afford to alienate.

"Arafat told me he would be happy if he got between 50-60 per cent. I personally hope he gets between 60 and 80 per cent," said Arafat aide Mahmoud Abbas in an interview with the Israeli daily Maariv.

Abbas: Ayyash was ready to surrender

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Yahya Ayyash, the militant bombmaker killed when a booby-trapped cellular phone exploded in his hand, was ready to surrender to Palestinian authorities when he was assassinated, a top Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader was quoted as saying Friday.

Israel is widely believed to have been behind the Jan. 5 assassination of Ayyash, nicknamed "the Engineer," the top bombmaker in the militant Hamas organisation. Ayyash was accused of masterminding a series of suicide bombings that killed at least 55 people and wounded hundreds.

Mahmoud Abbas, better known as Abu Mazen, called the assassination "unjustified." He said Ayyash had been convinced by the benefits of peace and had halted violent attacks on Israel.

"Ayyash and other Hamas fugitives had reached the conclusion that it was necessary to drop past attacks, which were justified at the time, and to join the Palestinian establishment," Mr. Abbas told the daily newspaper Maariv.

"An educated boy like him knew that the Palestinian society now opposes acts of violence and is not prepared to reconcile with them anymore," said Mr. Abbas, a top negotiator of the Israel-PLO declaration of principles that led to the establishment of autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"He began to see the benefits of peace and his entire thought process changed," Mr. Abbas said. "A very positive dialogue was opened with Ayyash and there was a good chance that he was going to give himself in to the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA)."

Mr. Abbas said Ayyash was "ready to give himself up."

In the months preceding Ayyash's death, Hamas had engaged in a dialogue that climaxed in a meeting in Cairo several weeks ago. The meeting ended without result, however, and Hamas said it would boycott this Saturday's elections for a Palestinian governing council.

But Hamas did not resume its campaign of deadly attacks on Israelis. The last such attack was an August bus bombing in Jerusalem.

Mr. Abbas said Ayyash's assassination brought the dialogue to a halt, but said he believed it would resume following the elections.

"This time, I hope we will reach a more clear and stable result," he said. "A ceasefire is a good thing. But their joining the democratic Palestinian establishment will be an even better step."

...as challenger demands to be taken seriously

AL BIREH (R) — Samiha Khalil could care less if other people view her quixotic lone challenge of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat in elections as a joke.

Ms. Khalil, 72, in an interview at her base — In'ash Al Usra (reviving the family society) at the West Bank town Al Bireh — dismissed polls and opinions from any other quarter.

"Why give the results before we start," the grandmother of 13 said over the babble of toddlers in the society nursery.

Ms. Khalil knows she has been an important part of the half of the Palestinian struggle known as "sumud", steadfastness, people who stayed on the land while Mr. Arafat waged war from outside.

Her society, founded in 1952, houses in three five-storey buildings kindergartens, an orphanage, nursing, secretarial and sewing schools, a bakery, a frozen food factory, a Palestinian handicrafts business and a clothing factory.

The compound is the best looking thing in a rubble-strewn town sorely worn by the last quarter century of Israeli occupation, ended in Al Bireh in December under a peace deal.

"I don't mind if I win or not... if I do not win I am still a member of the Palestine National Council." No one thinks Ms. Khalil is going to win.

A Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre Poll this week showed Mr. Arafat trouncing her, garnering 80 per cent of the vote versus her 7.2 per cent share.

On Friday, a day before the historic poll, there was not one article about Ms. Khalil in any of the four daily Palestinian newspapers that were otherwise flooded with election news.

"The most important thing about this is she's doing a great favour to Arafat and now it won't seem like one of those totalitarian 99.9 per cent elections," Hillel Frisch, a Truman Institute expert on Palestinian affairs, said with a chuckle.

But Mr. Frisch did not minimise Ms. Khalil's place in people's struggle. He said until the PLO "women's fronts" superseded it in 1979: "She headed the most important woman's organisation in the territories since 1965. She was really a nation-builder."

Like many Palestinians who lived under occupation, Ms. Khalil feels Mr. Arafat, an exile until his return in July 1994 under the historic 1993 PLO-Israel peace accord crafted in Oslo, seized the wrong end of the stick in negotiations with Israel.

She would start with what Mr. Arafat and Israel put on the back burner until final status peace talks begin in May: Return of Palestinian refugees, Jerusalem's status and borders, all in the explicit context of creating a Palestinian state beside Israel.

"People are boiling. The uprising is coming back again if we don't stop it... I would correct, not cancel Oslo. It is a way to peace. I am a peaceful woman. I don't like war," said Ms. Khalil, who added she would cooperate with Mr. Arafat after the elections.

War is what made her. In the first Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948, during which Israel was established, Ms. Khalil was an eight-months pregnant mother of four in what is today the southern Israeli town of Ashkelon.

Bombs drove them from Ashkelon, known to Palestinians as Majdal. They eventually ended up refugees in the Gaza Strip.

"The Gaza situation created me... people under trees, in schools, churches, everywhere. No bread." Her family had one drafty room. A wooden plank on two blocks was the family's only bed. He had her fifth child in that room.

Her husband, now dead, eventually got a U.N. teaching job in Al Bireh. Bread lines there spurred her to found the society.

"In my mind it was to make every individual independent and to make the society itself independent and in the back of my mind was to have an independent state," Ms. Khalil said.

Two of Ms. Khalil's sons, affiliated with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, were expelled years ago by Israel. It detained her six times and confined her to Al Bireh for two-and-a-half years at one point.

Ms. Khalil is known widely among Palestinians as "Auntie." Mr. Arafat, 66, is often called "The Old Man."

Dina Sarsour, 20, a graduate of Ms. Khalil's programmes who now works as a secretary at the society, said simply of the two old Palestinian warhorses: "We need them both."

COLUMN

Israeli army 'chauvinistic' — woman general

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli army's most senior woman officer accused the military in a parting shot of discriminating against women and being chauvinistic. "I think the Israeli army is chauvinistic. I think the army treats women completely differently than men," Brigadier-General Yehudit Ben-Natan, who retired from the army this week after 27 years of service, told Israel Radio. Gen. Ben-Natan, the former head of the women's command, said women should be allowed to join combat units and be judged by their skills, not their gender. Gen. Ben-Natan said former army chief Ehud Barak, now Israel's foreign minister, did not let her make policy decisions and treated her as an adviser. Israeli women are drafted at age 18 for two years of army service but are barred from most combat units, while men do three years of mandatory service and many years of reserve duty. The Israeli High Court of Justice ruled last year for the first time that the air force must accept a woman into its prestigious pilot training course but the woman failed the course.

New planets discovered that could support life

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (R) — U.S. space scientists said Wednesday they had discovered two new planets whose environments might be able to support life. The giant planets, 35 light-years from Earth, are thought to have surface conditions that would allow the formation of water, believed to be a key to the development of living organisms. "Life is now possible. There is a harbour, a site, on which life might form," Geoffrey Marcy, the San Francisco State University astrophysicist who made the discovery, told Reuters after a presentation at the annual meeting of the American Astronomical Society. "We watched 'star wars', we watched 'star trek', and Jean Luc Picard (Star Trek's captain) had no trouble finding planets but we professionals did," he said. "And now, finally, there's a site for Jean Luc and for extraterrestrial life." Mr. Marcy, with fellow researcher Paul Butler, discovered the new planets in the Virgo and Ursa major constellations. Both are bigger than Jupiter and visible to the naked eye from Earth. One of the planets is thought to have a surface temperature of 185 degrees Fahrenheit (85 Celsius), below water's boiling point of 212 degrees (100 Celsius). "That's cool enough to permit complex molecules to exist, ranging from carbon dioxide to complicated organic molecules," Mr. Marcy said. "This planet could conceivably have rain or even oceans." The other planet, at a distance from its sun comparable to that of Earth from its sun, appears to have a region in its atmosphere where the as-yet-unmeasured temperature might allow water, the scientists reported.

Japan in narrow straits over record

TOKYO (AFP) — A small island town in western Japan's Seto inland sea will make the Guinness Book of World Records next year with a listing for the world's narrowest strait, local officials said Friday. Only 9.93 metres (32 feet nine inches) wide at its narrowest point, the Dofuchi Strait, in Tonosho, Kagawa prefecture, beats the previous record holder, Greece's Khalkis Strait, by more than 30 metres (99 feet).